



Southern California Preparedness Foundation

Home Security Checklist

Protect Your Home

- Walk your property with law enforcement, friend, or neighbor to help find easy entry points.
- Prune trees and shrubs that can hide someone. Keep your lawn mowed, and repair broken sprinklers promptly.
- Protect ladders, tools, and hidden house keys.
- Replace flimsy doors and secure door windows with wire mesh, or install a steel outer door.
- Pin the hinges of exterior doors that swing into your home (a screw protrudes between them).
- Rekey your locks every 10 years or when you lose a key.
- Keep your doors and windows locked as often as possible.
- Keep a hidden key with a trusted neighbor.
- Use a quality deadbolt that has a heavy-duty strike plate and use screws that are 2½" or longer.
- Use a patio pinlock, screws in the upper track or a broomstick or heavy PVC pipe to secure sliding glass doors.
- Install heavy-duty sash lock on double-hung windows & vertical surface bolts on French doors.
- Install motion lights outside, above the reach of criminals and not aimed at your neighbors.
- Always keep your car(s) locked, with the windows fully closed, and valuables (including your GPS) out of sight.
- Use an electronic garage door opener and keep your car(s) inside (change the default factory code).
- When parking outside, select a well-lit location.
- Engrave your valuables with your driver's license number.
- Keep irreplaceable items in a fire-resistant safe or bank safety deposit box.
- If you have a home alarm system, use the perimeter feature at night.
- Dogs are great. Post a "Beware of Dog" sign (even without a dog). Laying out a dog bowl and toy is good, too.
- Don't open the door to a stranger.
- Don't put your full name on your mailbox, and don't leave mail outside for pickup.
- If you have a fence with a gate, lock it, and don't leave notes for delivery or service people.
- Password-protect your electronic devices (smart phone, computer, tablet, etc.)
- Insure your valuables (may require a rider). Photo or video record your possessions.

Before You Go on Vacation

- Join a neighborhood watch and report any suspicious people and cars.
- Ask a trusted neighbor to keep a "lived in" routine outside and inside your home.
- Add automatic timers to select plug-in lamps and leave a radio on, preferably a talk-radio station.
- Turn off phone ringers, lock exterior doors and windows, and turn on the alarm system.
- Suspend newspaper/magazine delivery and arrange for a neighbor or post office to hold your mail.
- Adjust shades, blinds, and curtains so no one can see inside your home.

Fire Safety

- Make sure air circulates around appliances and that refrigerator/freezer external coils are dust-free.
- Clean clothes dryer air ducts annually to eliminate lint build-up (good to check under dryer as well).
- Ensure that the electrical outlets in your home are not overloaded (no multi-taps!).
- Professionally inspect your home heating system and clean the kitchen's oven hood screen.
- Use a protective fireplace grate and screen and professionally clean your chimney every 5 years.
- Install smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors in every bedroom and hallway. Check twice a year.
- Keep fire extinguishers (ABC type) in your car(s), in the garage, and under every sink. Learn how to use it.
- Teach family members how to call for help, evacuate safely, and where to meet outside.

Electronic Security

- Add cameras to watch around your house if the need justifies the expense.
- Install a video intercom or wide-view peephole to see who is at the door.
- A home alarm can scare away intruders, alert occupants and notify police.
- Poorly designed, or incorrectly installed, alarm systems are prone to false alarms.
- Use alarm screens, fire sensors and carbon monoxide detectors with your alarm.
- If you have a small pet, use motion detectors that have pet immunity.
- Install a loud alarm siren and a radio backup on the alarm phone line if it's vulnerable.
- Read the alarm contract's terms carefully, monitoring fee, and who owns what.
- Understand the alarm contract's warranty term, and what is and is not covered.
- "Free" alarm systems are a rental with a high monthly fee and long commitment.
- Wait to sign and pretend that you already have the alarm. Can you afford it? Do you need it?