



Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office

Home Security Self Survey

Since 1909, the deputies of Palm Beach County have provided a safe environment for hundreds of thousands of people who live, work and visit Palm Beach County. The Sheriff's Office is committed to improving awareness, and sharing the fundamentals of crime prevention in order to ensure our community is safe and secure.

The goal of crime prevention is to reduce the risk of becoming a victim. In order to accomplish this effectively, it is important to remove opportunities for a criminal to take advantage of you and your property. You are attempting to prevent victimization by presenting an unattractive target to the criminal. This can be as complex as installing a high tech alarm system and lighting to something as simple as locking your doors.

Crime prevention is using instinct, common sense, and taking action to eliminate or greatly reduce the criminal's opportunity. We all have a personal part to play regarding crime prevention. A large share of the responsibility of reducing criminal opportunity lies with you.

This survey is limited mainly to the physical security of your residence. There are many other areas which also deserve your attention. A well rounded prevention program will also address; Personal Safety, Fire Prevention, How to Avoid ID Theft, Frauds and Scams, and incorporating Operation Identification.

This checklist gives an indication of the security of your home. Every "NO" checked shows a weak point that may help a burglar gain access to your home. To improve your security, attempt to eliminate the boxes checked "NO". Go through the list systematically. Remember this checklist only points out your weak areas. Complying with these guidelines will not make your home burglar proof, but will improve your protection.

If after completing this survey you find that the security of your home is poor or if you have any questions regarding security procedures and equipment, contact one of our Crime Prevention Specialists at 561-688-3970.

Home Security Test, Fifth Edition - Copyright © 1995 by [Robert A. Gardner, CPP](#)



Home Security Self Survey

By Robert A. Gardner, CPP

Did You Know?

- Most crimes happen because someone gave a criminal an opportunity to act.
- Little planning goes into most burglaries.
- No neighborhood (rich or poor) is safe from crime.
- Professional burglars are very rare.
- Most burglars are neighborhood juveniles.
- Most home burglaries occur in the daytime.
- Most burglars enter through unlocked doors or windows.
- It takes less than two minutes for the average burglar to get into your home.
- If you can delay his entry for just three minutes, most burglars will give up and leave.
- Just the risk of being seen or heard will deter most burglars.
- A cooperative program such as Neighborhood Watch is a strong deterrent to crime.
- Most burglars will not enter an occupied home.



Your Lifestyle

- | | Yes | No |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Do you consider security an important factor in family life? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Is your family constantly aware of the risk of crime? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Have you held a family meeting to discuss crime and the things that can be done to prevent it? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Do you avoid telling strangers your daily routines? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Have children been told not to discuss family business with strangers? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Do you try to make your home look occupied, even when you are away? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Do you have someone pick up your deliveries when you're away? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Do you always leave a radio or TV on when you're away? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Do you leave lights on and use timers when you're away? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Do you avoid leaving notes for friends, services, etc on your front door when you're away? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Do you avoid displaying valuable items in plain sight? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Do neighbors routinely look out for each other and report suspicious strangers to police? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. Have you become involved in the Sheriff's Office crime prevention program? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. Have you made your local officials aware of your feelings about crime in your community? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. When approached by solicitors, either in person or by telephone, do you verify that the charity or group they represent is legitimate before you contribute? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Building Exterior and Yard

- | | Yes | No |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Are all vulnerable points well lit at night? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Is shrubbery trimmed away from all doors and windows? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Is the yard neat and well cared for? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. If a fence would increase your protection, do you have one? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Are all gates in good repair and properly locked? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Are driveways, walkways and entrances brightly lit? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Is shrubbery beside driveways, walkways and entrances trimmed to prevent attackers from hiding in wait? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Is all security lighting protected by vandal-proof housings? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. If appropriate, do you use "thorny" shrubs and plants to deter access to your yard and vulnerable entry points? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Have you trimmed all trees that could provide access to an upper window or the roof? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |



Doors

- | | Yes | No |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Are all exterior doors of solid core construction? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Are all doors equipped with good locks? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Are all doors protected so that the locks cannot be reached and operated by breaking out glass panes or lightweight panels? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Do exposed hinges have non-removable pins? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. If hinge pins are removable, are doors "pinned" to prevent removal? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Is a good quality deadbolt lock with at least a 1" throw used on all exterior doors? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Is the lock designed or the door frame constructed to prevent opening the door by spreading the frame? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Is the bolt on all deadbolt locks made of case-hardened steel? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Are all outside lock cylinders designed to prevent twisting or prying? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Are all double doors equipped with deadbolts and flush bolts? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Are all locks cylinder type with five pin tumblers? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Are all keys accounted for? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. Are locks changed when a key is lost? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. When you move into a new home, do you automatically change the locks? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. Do you avoid giving keys to service people? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16. Are garage and out building doors kept closed and locked when not in use? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17. Are garage doors equipped with an automatic opener or secured with a hasp and padlock at each end? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18. Are padlocks locked in place when not in use? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 19. Are hasps made of case hardened steel and equipped with non-removable screws? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20. Are padlocks equipped with heel and toe locking, five pin tumbler and a minimum of a 9/32" shackle made of case hardened steel? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21. Have you eliminated or secured all pet doors? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 22. Have you eliminated all outside "hidden keys"? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 23. Have you removed the key codes from the bottom of all padlocks? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Sliding Glass Doors

- | | Yes | No |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Have all sliding glass doors been equipped with a secondary lock to prevent them from being pried open or lifted out of the track? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Is safety glass installed in all sliding glass doors? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |



Windows

- 1. Have all sliding glass windows been equipped with a secondary lock to prevent them from being pried open or lifted out of the track?
- 2. Do double hung windows have a secondary locking device?
- 3. Have louvered windows been replaced or have the panes of glass been glued in place permanently?
- 4. Are all accessible second story windows protected in the same manner as ground floor windows?
- 5. Have you removed the cranks from casement windows?
- 6. Have all unused windows been sealed shut permanently?
- 7. Have you considered using a burglar resistant glazing in windows which are particularly vulnerable?
- 8. Are window locks installed in such a way that a burglar must break the glass to reach them?

Interior Protection

- 1. Do you store small valuables in a safe deposit box at a bank?
- 2. If valuables must be kept at home, are they stored in a safe or security closet?
- 3. If a home safe is used, does it weigh more than 750 lbs.?
- 4. If not, is it anchored in place so that it cannot be carried off?
- 5. Do you know the difference between a fire safe and "money" safe?
- 6. Have you equipped an interior closet with reinforced interior walls, solid door, deadbolt lock and non-removable hinge pins for use in storing valuables?
- 7. Do you limit cash on hand to small amounts?
- 8. Do you have smoke detectors installed and fire extinguishers available?
- 9. Do you carry sufficient insurance to cover the loss of valuables?



Property Identification

1. Where possible, have you engraved your driver's license number on valuable property?
2. Have you avoided using secret, coded or hidden identification as the only method of marking valuable property?
3. Have you avoided using identification marks which cannot be easily traced by police (Social Security numbers, initials, personal codes, etc.)?
4. Have you made an inventory of your property, recorded descriptions and serial numbers and filed the information away in a safe, fireproof place?
5. Have you made a photographic record of the entire contents of your home with emphasis on items that cannot be easily marked such as jewelry and art works?

Personal Protection

1. Do you have an unlisted telephone number?
2. If you live alone, do you avoid advertising the fact?
3. Do you require positive identification before you permit strangers to enter your home?
4. If you are in doubt about a person's identification, do you verify it by contacting the organization they represent before admitting them?
5. Do you supervise strangers who are legitimately in your home?
6. Have you instructed children to avoid talking to strangers about your home, lifestyle, personal business, etc.?
7. Have children be instructed to never go anywhere with a stranger or allow a stranger into the house when you are away?
8. Do you and your children avoid giving out personal information or family schedules over the phone?
9. If suspicious about callers or strangers at your door, do you call the police?
10. Do you use a door viewer before you answer the door?
11. Do you verify the honesty and dependability of domestic help and baby-sitters?
12. Have you removed all identifying information (name, address, etc.) from your key ring?
13. Do you avoid giving your house keys along with your car keys when the car is parked or serviced?
14. Have you instructed employers, co-workers and employees to avoid giving anyone information of any kind about you without your knowledge and permission?
15. Are you especially cautious about bringing sensitive or valuable business information or work home with you?

Other Precautions

- 1. Have you considered getting a small dog with a loud bark to guard the house when you're away?
- 2. Have you considered installing a burglar and fire alarm system?
- 3. If you have decided to buy or lease an alarm system have you talked to your local crime prevention officer and gotten at least three estimates from alarm companies?
- 4. Do you really understand what type of alarm system you require and how it works, its limitations, how it will be monitored, etc?
- 5. If, because of your employment or position in life, you or your family members face a high risk of kidnapping or personal violence, have you consulted a security specialist to develop a protection program?

Obviously, completing this checklist won't solve all your security problems. It will however, give you a good idea of the level of security you now have. With that knowledge, you can begin to develop a security program that provides the type of individualized protection your particular home requires.

If after completing this survey you find that the security of your home is poor or if you have any questions regarding security procedures and equipment, contact the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office Crime Prevention Unit and ask to speak with one of our crime prevention specialists. Your time will be well justified by making your home a safer, and more secure place.

Remember too, this survey covers only a small part of a complete residential security program. Your residence isn't fully protected until you have taken steps to improve the security of every aspect of your home.

For more information please contact:

The Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office Crime Prevention Unit at (561) 688-3970 or crimeprevention@pbso.org.