

Home Security Evaluation Checklist

Purpose

This checklist is designed to help resident's become more aware of certain safety issues that impact the security and safety of their homes or apartments. It is not intended to include all issues that could be considered, but is useful in starting the process of thinking about safety issues and perhaps making changes that would help protect you, your family and property.

Burglary Awareness

When burglars target a home, they are looking for easy targets. They may observe a weakness and attempt to take something or enter the home. These are often called "crimes of opportunity" because burglars see an opportunity for an easy theft. No house is absolutely burglar-proof but you can discourage them if you "harden the target" so criminals will not think your home is an easy opportunity. Generally, if they find that it will be too difficult, they will quickly leave.

Most burglaries are not well planned, criminals may be on the prowl to steal something and when they see an easy target or something of value, they just go for it. Many burglars are juveniles or young adults, often from or familiar with the neighborhood. 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 enter a home. If they can be delayed for just three minutes, most burglars will give up and leave. The risk of being seen or heard will deter most burglars. In difficult economic times, burglars become more brazen and will take more risks, sometimes entering a home before finding out someone is home, this is a dangerous situation and you may need to "harden the target" to help protect yourself and your family.

Self Evaluation or Police Department Evaluation

This evaluation checklist can be completed by yourself or you can request a team from the Police Department to visit your home and make a physical review of your residence with you. If you complete the evaluation yourself and have questions, please call the Police Department and we would be happy to help you.

Resident Representations

During a physical evaluation by Police Department representatives of your residence, many of the answers to the questions will be based on the resident's representations and may not be observed during the evaluation process. For example, the checklist includes a question, "Has everyone in the house been informed by an adult to not enter the house if they suspect a burglary has been committed?", and the answer recorded on the checklist will be based on the resident's representation.

An asterisk symbol (*) is included with questions in the checklist that may rely totally or in part on the representations of the resident.

Yes or No Answers

“No” answers indicate areas where you could take action to improve your home’s security. These are just some of the steps you could take to “harden the target” and discourage burglars.

Prior to the Evaluation by the Police Department

	Yes	No
1. Has the “Resident Agreement” been reviewed and signed by both the Resident(s) and Police Department Evaluators?	___	___
2. *Are there any dangerous conditions, hazards or dogs/pets that we should be aware of or that may present a danger to the Evaluation Team? Please inform us of any conditions such as broken steps, electrical problems, slippery areas, giant attack dogs, or regular pets that are present.	___	___

Front Entrance

3. *Is the house address number illuminated and easily visible from the street during all hours of the day/night? (Emergency responders need highly visible addresses to find a house quickly.)	___	___
4. Is the front door of metal or solid wood construction? (Hollow core doors can easily be punched through to reach a lock.)	___	___
5. Are there windows in the door or within 40 inches of the locks? (Windows near the door can be broken to unlock the door. “Security Film”, available at hardware stores in the windows section, can be added to prevent the glass from being broken.)	___	___
6. Is the door secured by a deadbolt with a minimum 1” throw?	___	___
7. *Are strikes and strike plates adequate and properly installed with 3” screws?	___	___
8. If there are no windows in the door, is there a wide-angle viewer (peep hole), security camera or voice intercom device?	___	___
9. If there is a mail slot, delivery port or pet entrance at the doorway, is the lock protected from being reached from the outside?	___	___
10. If there is a screen or storm door does it have an adequate lock?	___	___
11. *Is exterior or front entrance well lighted?	___	___
12. Can the front entrance be observed from the street or public areas? (Burglars don’t like to be seen, a visible front door is not their target of choice.)	___	___

13. Are shrubs or vegetation trimmed to prevent concealment from the street or public areas? _____

Side or Rear Entrance

14. Is the door itself of metal or solid wood construction? _____

15. *Is doorframe strong enough and tight enough to prevent forcing or spreading? (Burglars can make quick work with a screwdriver or pry bar to simply spread the frame away from the lock if the doorframe has too much "give".) _____

16. Are door hinges protected from removal from outside? (If door hinges are installed with the hinge facing outside, a screw or pin can be installed to prevent removing the hinges from the outside.) _____

17. Are there windows in the door or within 40 inches of the locks? (Consider adding "Security Film", see question 5 above.) _____

18. Are lock mechanisms safe from being reached from the outside through a delivery port or pet door? _____

19. Is the door secured by a deadbolt lock with a minimum 1" throw? _____

20. *Are strike and strike plates adequate and properly installed with 3" screws? _____

21. *Is the exterior of the doorway adequately lighted? _____

22. Is the doorway not concealed from street or neighbor's view by porch, fence or landscaping? _____

23. *If the doorway has a screen or storm door does it have an adequate lock? _____

24. *If the door is a sliding glass door, is the sliding panel secured from being lifted out of the track by someone outside? _____

25. *If the door is a sliding glass door, is a 'charley'bar" or key-operated lock used to prevent prying? (A stick placed in the track may not be enough if it can be jiggled out of the track or can be slammed hard enough to pop out.) _____

Entrances from Garage and Basement

26. Are all entrances to living quarters from garage and/or basement of metal or solid wood construction? _____

27. Does the door from garage and/or basement to living quarters have adequate locks similar to what is recommended for exterior doors? _____

Ground Floor Windows

28. *Do all windows have adequate locks in operating order? _____

29. *Do windows have screens or storm windows that lock from the inside? _____

30. *If any windows open onto areas that offer higher risk of burglary, e.g. computers, weapons, valuables visible, are extra security measures in place like security window screens? _____

31. Are exterior areas of windows free from concealing structure or landscaping? _____

32. *Is exterior adequately lighted at all window areas? _____

33. *Do windows have adequate pin or key locking devices for partial opening of windows? _____

Upper Floor Windows

34. *If any upper floor windows open onto porch or garage roofs or roofs of adjoining buildings, are they secured adequately to prevent entry? _____

35. *Are trees and shrubbery kept trimmed back from upper floor windows to prevent concealment or access?
(Burglars often make entry into a second floor window because these windows, usually bedrooms, are generally not secured by residents as well as ground floor windows and doors.) _____

36. *If ladders are kept outside the house, where they may be accessible to use to gain access to the upper windows, are they secured with chains and locks? _____

Basement Doors and Windows

37. *If there is a door from outside to the basement, is that door of adequate strength and properly secured to prevent unwanted access? _____

38. *Are outside basement entrances adequately lighted? _____

- 39. Can the outside basement door be observed from the street or by neighbors? _____
- 40. *Are all basement windows adequately secured from the inside? _____

Garage Doors and Windows

- 41. *Is the automobile entrance door to the garage equipped with adequate locking devices? _____
- 42. *Is the garage door automobile entrance kept closed and locked at all times?
(Burglars love to see an open automobile entrance, they can quickly just grab anything in sight like tools, golf clubs or sports equipment and leave.) _____
- 43. *Are garage windows secured adequately from the inside? _____
- 44. Is the side door or utility entrance of adequate strength and equipped with deadbolt locks similar to recommended strength (solid core or steel) for a front entrance door? _____
- 45. *Are tools, ladders and other valuable equipment kept inside the garage to prevent theft? _____
- 46. *Are all garage doors adequately lighted? _____

Basic Gun Safety

See gun safety and related regulations on the website "ag.ca.gov/firearms" which includes frequently asked questions and other useful information including "Tips for Gun Owners", "Guns and Children", "Handgun Safety Certificate Program" and other educational information.

- 47. *Are all guns safely stored in a locked box, safe or vault? _____
- 48. *Are all guns stored separately from ammunition? _____
- 49. *Are guns intended for home protection equipped with a trigger guard lock? _____
- 50. *Have all members of your household been trained to treat every gun as though it were loaded? _____
- 51. *If children are in the household, or visit, are all guns secured and locked so they are not accessible?
(Guns are of great curiosity to youngsters, this safety point is also highly important for grandparents who need to consider visiting grandchildren. Prevent a tragedy, secure your guns.) _____

52. *Are all guns in the household registered so they can be identified if stolen or lost? _____

53. *Have all members of the household completed a gun safety class? _____
(See the above noted website or other internet sources for class information.)

Basic Swimming Pool Safety

See the California Swimming Pool Safety Act of 2006 which is available on the internet for specific information. Many other sources are available for reference regarding pool and spa safety.

54. *Are all exterior doors leading to the pool area equipped with a specific door alarm that alerts when someone has entered the area? (Required by California Code if any door opens to a pool area if the door is considered part of the safety barrier to pool access – see California Building Code Section 3109.) _____

55. *If the pool area has a secondary fence, are the gates secured with a gate lock or auxiliary padlock? _____

56. *Is the pool area properly surrounded by a fence? _____
(A surrounding fence must be at least 60” high, openings in the fence barrier cannot exceed 4”, there should not be any horizontal “footholds” that could enable a child to climb the fence, gates must be self-closing and have a self-latching device located at least 54” from the bottom of the gate and the latch must be positioned on the inside of the pool area and must not have an opening within 18” from the outside. See California Building Code Section 3109 for complete information.)

57. *Are all gates self-closing and self-latching? _____

58. *Is every member of the household trained in CPR? _____

59. *Is every member of the household able to swim proficiently without help? _____

60. *Is every member of the household, including babysitters or visitors, trained on what to do in case of a pool emergency? _____

61. *Are children that are in the pool area always supervised by a responsible adult? _____

Interior Security

62. *Are there several lights in the home set up on automatic timers? _____
(The appearance of an occupied house can discourage burglars.)

63. *Does the home have a working alarm system? _____
64. *If so, do the residents remember to always set the alarm? _____
65. *Does the telephone answering system avoid announcing “we’re not home right now” or “we’ll be gone until (a later date or time)”?
(Simply record your message as “We can’t come to the phone right now, please leave a message”. Avoid including your name on the recorded message.) _____
66. *Is a key to the house not “hidden” outside where burglars could find it?
(The flower pots, under mats, on the ledge above the door, barbeques etc. are where burglars look first for an outside key. Outside light fixtures are also not safe. Can you think of other popular places to hide keys?) _____
67. *Is the deadbolt and other locks on all exterior doors always locked when anyone is in the house?
(Burglars often try the doors and if unlocked, just enter. Just because you are home doesn’t mean you are not at risk. Always locking your doors is a particularly wise habit to teach children.) _____

Basic Fire Safety

68. *Are there adequate smoke detectors in key areas: hallways, family room, near kitchen, top of stairways, bedrooms?
(New homes often have as many as 10+ smoke detectors to meet modern building codes. Don’t skimp in this basic safety practice, lives can be saved.) _____
69. *Are the smoke alarms working, have they been tested by the resident recently? _____
70. *Are there any carbon-monoxide detectors? Are they in working order? Tested recently by the resident? _____
71. *Are batteries in alarms replaced every six months?
(Many people use the change over in Daylight Savings Time to change.) _____
72. *Do all members of the household know what to do in case of a fire or other emergency? Is there a plan of escape? A plan to meet outside? _____
73. *For two story homes, is there an emergency escape ladder and have they had an actual drill preparing them to use it?
(It’s too late to read the directions for an emergency ladder and train everyone on how to react when a fire or problem is already at hand.) _____
74. *Are all flammables stored in original, marked containers and away from sources _____

of heat and flames. _____

75. *Are there adequate fire extinguishers in the kitchen? Garage? Are they charged? Are they the right type for a fire in that area? _____

76. *Has the resident reviewed brochures about residential fire safety recently? Have they taught fire safety to their children? _____

Senior's Safety

77. *Is the resident aware of common slip and fall hazards such as loose carpets, problems with throw rugs or upturned edges? Extension cords?
(Slip and fall accidents are a leading cause for emergency responses. They can cause serious injury and long, debilitating recovery periods. Common causes are slip rugs, unseen liquids on the floor, upturned edges on carpets, extension cords and dogs and cats that can move to be underfoot.) _____

78. *Are there handrails in the bathroom or other areas if needed?
(The most common place for a slip and fall is the bathroom, second place goes to the kitchen.) _____

79. Kitchen fires are also a leading cause of injury. Does the resident have a fire extinguisher readily available to put out a grease or oven fire? _____

80. Does the resident have contact with people every day? Do they have a "buddy" system for checking up on each other every day? _____

81. Seniors are often the target of scams because thieves believe they are easy targets. Does the resident exercise healthy skepticism when dealing with strangers either in person or on the telephone?
(If in doubt, check it out! Call the police or a friend to check out suspicious offers or people trying to sell products or a scheme requiring money.) _____

82. Door to door sales people or solicitors are required to have a license issued by the City of Lincoln. Does the resident usually ask to see the license?
Does the resident ever let solicitors into the house for a demo, to use the phone or bathroom or get a drink of water?
(Burglars and con artists try a number of schemes to get into a home so they can steal anything in sight, distract the resident or case the property to come back later. Just don't let any stranger in your home!) _____

83. Is the resident aware of methods used for criminals to commit Identify Theft?
(Identity theft is a major problem and because it is so difficult to find these criminals, many of whom are in foreign countries, there is little hope of _____

recovery. Thus prevention is the key. Shred all documents with your name, never give vital information such as social security numbers or bank account numbers over the telephone, etc. See additional sources for guidance.)

84. Prescription and other medicine. Is the resident aware that visitors, especially children and grandchildren, need to be kept safe from meds not authorized for them? Do they have a plan for removal or safekeeping meds from visitors? _____

Safety Practices

85. *Has everyone in the house been informed by an adult of what to do if they encounter a burglar breaking in or already in the house? _____
86. *Has everyone in the house been informed by an adult to not enter the house if they suspect a burglary has been committed? _____
87. *Are there emergency numbers listed by the telephone? _____
88. *Does the resident know to avoid unnecessary display or publicity of valuables? _____
89. *Does the resident have a descriptive list and pictures of important valuables to assist in recovery? _____
90. *Has the resident engraved identification on highly valued items to assist in recovery? (Engraver pen is available for use from the Police Department.) _____
91. *While on vacation or other trips, does the resident have a trusted person who checks on the home? _____
92. *While on vacation or other trips, do they stop all deliveries and make it appear the house is occupied? _____
93. *While traveling, does the resident leave their phone number or place where they can be located with a trusted person, in case of an emergency? _____
94. *If there are children in the house, has the resident prepared them on what to do in an emergency? When someone is at the door? How to get help? What to say when answering the telephone? _____
95. *Are all prescription and other medicines and household chemicals locked up and/or stored where children or visitors cannot have access? _____
96. *For vehicles parked outside of a garage, are valuables always removed from sight? Doors always locked? _____

97. *Does the resident belong to a Neighborhood Watch group? _____

98. *If they don't belong to a Neighborhood Watch group, would they like help in finding a group or starting one in their neighborhood? _____

Neighborhood Watch groups are important in helping you to prevent crime. The Lincoln Police Department highly recommends you take advantage of being part of a group in your neighborhood. Call the Police Department today to find out how to be more informed and protect your family with Neighborhood Watch.

Summary Discussion – Points to Consider

Conclusion

We have discussed the findings of this Security Evaluation:

Evaluator _____, Date _____

Evaluator _____, Date _____

Resident _____, Date _____

Resident _____, Date _____