

A TIP FROM THE HOUSING CENTER

Crime-Stoppers' Checklist

Use this quiz to evaluate the security at your house:

- Do you have a dog? Barking dogs attract the kind of attention a burglar doesn't need.
- Do you leave a radio or television set on when you're out? The sound of voices will send an intruder elsewhere.
- Do you refuse to open doors to strangers? Always ask for identification or check the driveway for a repair or delivery truck. If in doubt, call the utility or business in question to ask if they have sent someone to your home.
- Do you have peepholes in all solid doors? Don't rely on chain locks to see who is at the door. They can easily be forced once a door is ajar.
- Do you keep your garage door locked? Thieves like attached garages because, once inside, they can unobtrusively force the door to the house.
- Are your basement windows secure? These are another popular point of entry for intruders.
- Do you keep trees and shrubbery trimmed? Overgrown vegetation gives a burglar more privacy.
- Do you have neighbors collect your mail and newspapers while you're away? You can also ask the post office and paper carrier to hold deliveries until you return.
- Have you familiarized baby sitters and other outsiders with your safety measures? Show them escape routes and familiarize them with any locks and alarm systems.
- Does your neighborhood have a watch program? If not, check with your local police for information about starting one.

Insuring Against Loss

Homeowners or renters insurance provides money to replace possessions after a fire or theft. Remember to keep a good inventory of your property, including serial numbers. A quick way to do this is with snapshots or a camcorder. Store your inventory in a safe-deposit box or other location outside your home, and update it every year.

While you're making an inventory of your valuables, consider engraving them with your name or Social Security number. This makes it easier to trace the goods back to you if they're stolen. Many local police departments will loan etching tools.