



# Security in the Home



*'Practical ways  
to protect your home'*

## Crime is Preventable

House-breaking is one of the most common crimes. The number of reported house-breaking cases in Queensland has increased in the past decade and house-breaking now represents one in five of all criminal offences reported to police. However, research suggests that most of these crimes are preventable.

Most house break-ins appear to be crimes of opportunity with entry gained through an open or unlocked window or door.

Most intruders are looking for (and often find) a house left open or unlocked where they can get what they want with ease and make a quick getaway.

The following information may be of assistance in making your home more secure and reducing the opportunity for crime.

## The Cost

It is not always necessary to spend a lot of money on home security. There are things you can do that cost nothing. Care and vigilance are free. If everyone made sure to lock up securely before leaving home, the impact on crime would be quick and dramatic (more Queenslanders would be working together with police to combat crime).

## New Homes

If you are building a new home, talk to your architect about designing to prevent crime. You can insist on using solid doors, locks on windows, the elimination of dark spots, improved exterior lighting, an alarm system, and good quality deadlocks on doors.

## Some General Crime Prevention Tips

Your house number should be easily seen so police and emergency services can find your premises quickly. Reflective numbers are helpful. If your house is on a corner the number should face the street named in your address.

It is unwise to leave messages on doors. They suggest no one is home. If having goods delivered while you are out, have a neighbour collect them. A parcel on the doorstep also indicates no one is home.

Funeral and wedding notices containing an address can tell a potential offender when to strike. If attending such events have a friend stay over or ask a neighbour to watch your house. If living alone, it is best not to advertise the fact in the telephone book or on your letter box. Consider leaving a light on and the radio or television playing to give the impression that someone is home.

Cash and valuables should be kept out of easy reach, and out of sight. If you have a quality home safe use it. Consider a safety deposit box for especially valuable items.

If you hear an intruder in your home – do not risk injury. Concentrate on raising the alarm and staying safe. If outside, and you see signs of a break-in, do not enter. The intruder may still be present. Go to a neighbour's house and seek help to call police and wait there until they arrive.

## Phone

If you own a touch phone, key in the emergency numbers of:

1. Local Police Station
2. 000
3. Family, neighbour or close friend, so they can be dialled by pressing one button.

This may be an important time saver especially in an emergency or dialling in the dark.

Consider connecting a telephone extension to your bedroom. Messages on answering machines should be carefully worded so as not to indicate you live alone or the house is unattended.

## Doors

The external doors of your house should be of solid-core construction and preferably fitted with deadlocks.

Safety hinges will prevent the door being pulled from its hinges. If a door opens outwards, hinge bolts should be fitted.

The inactive leaf of a set of double doors (French doors) should be fitted with concealed lever push-bolts or, preferably, key-operated locks. The other leaf can be fitted with a deadlock/deadbolt and used as a normal door.

## Security Doors

If you wish to leave a door open for ventilation, consider installing a security door which complies with Australian Standards 2803.1 and 2804. A good quality security door should have the certifying label clearly displayed on the door, have a heavy duty frame, three security hinges, a deadlock, and be of 7mm mesh (if aluminium) or 10-12mm square bars if steel. Keep it locked at all times even when at home.

## Holiday Checklist

A house left empty for a long period is a prime target for intruders. When going on holidays, take the following steps to give your house that "lived in" look and reduce the chances of a break-in:

- Cancel milk and papers. Have mail held or redirected.
- Have a friend remove junk mail and mow the lawn.
- Turn down the telephone.
- Inform local police of your absence and leave contact name and number.
- Wheelie bins should be locked away or chained to posts away from windows.
- Have a friend or neighbour bring in your wheelie bin after being emptied.

You should also make sure all doors and windows are securely locked with keyed locks.

For further information on holiday security precautions obtain a copy of the 'Holiday Precautions' brochure available at your local police station.

## Windows

Few house windows have locks built-in as part of their design. There is a wide variety of suitable keyed window locks available from hardware stores or Master Locksmiths.

All ground-floor windows, as well as those that an intruder might reach from a drainpipe, flat roof or “wheelie bin”, should be fitted with quality locks.

Windows should be secured so they cannot be lifted from their tracks and if replacing glass consider other materials which are harder to break or penetrate. Louvred windows should be grilled or barred.

If you want to leave windows open, consider installing aesthetically pleasing, solidly constructed aluminium or steel window security grilles. Where security grilles are placed on windows, ensure some grilles are hinged to allow exit in emergencies. You may also care to consider external roller shutters or French shutters that lock internally.



*Always lock up even if only going out for a few minutes.*

## Locks

Fit good quality deadlocks on solid-core external doors with strong frames, and maintain locks in good repair or have them periodically serviced by reputable and competent tradespersons.

A double-cylinder deadlock requires key operation from either side of the door. This is essential if the door has a glass panel within or adjacent to it.

Easy to fit key-operated locks, (capable of being keyed alike), are suitable for aluminium and timber sliding doors, sliding windows, double hung (sash), casement and hopper (awning) windows. These should be fitted as required and as directed on the packaging of the locks. Remember to use the non-returnable screws supplied.

Locks for meter boxes and any gates to the meter box should be purchased from your local electricity board. This means householders can lock gates but electricity board staff still have access to allow them to take meter readings.



*There are many brands of good quality locks available.*

## Keys

Under no circumstances should you 'hide' your house key under a doormat, pot plant or other obvious place. If necessary, give a spare key to a trusted neighbour but do not give one to a tradesperson. Copies are quickly and easily made. Where added security is required consider a restricted key system.

Do not mark your keys with your name and address. You can mark your keys using the police property identification system.

Locks may be 'keyed alike' so that one key will open all doors and one key will open all windows.

Make sure you keep keys where you can reach them in a hurry – for example, in case of fire.

## Intruder Alarms

Alarms should not be a substitute for good physical security but rather be an addition to it.

When buying an intruder alarm system consideration should be given to obtaining more than one quote so as to make sure you are getting the system you need.

There are several alarm components available including:

- Movement detectors (ultrasonic, microwave infra-red) which react to movement and/or heat and can be placed in strategic locations around your home.
- Magnetic Reed Switches, electro-mechanical devices that are activated when the electronic circuit is broken.



*Seek advice when installing an alarm.*

- Duress or panic assistance in the form of a fixed button, coded pad pin alert, or a portable device connected to an alarm

A good alarm should include the following:

- 24 hour battery backup.
- Comply with Australian Standards 2201.
- Two tamper resistant sirens, one inside and one outside (satellite).
- "User friendly" code pad and control box.
- The installing company has technicians available every day throughout the year.
- Installer uses 14/020 wiring (six core wiring).
- 12 month warranty on components and installation.

If monitored, the alarm system must include Austel approved dialler and wiring. The installer must be licenced.

No alarms are directly connected to a police station. Neighbours, friends or an alarm monitoring security company are usually relied upon to ensure an effective response (notify police if necessary) to the alarm.

## Vision

A house which allows neighbours and people walking past a clear and uninterrupted view of the home makes it less likely to be broken into.

A large front fence is ideal for privacy, but provides perfect cover for intruders. Bushes and trees that obscure windows and doors can make good hiding places.



Ensure that your front door and house number are visible from the street.

## Property Identification

Property is less likely to be stolen if it is marked using the Queensland Police Service property identification system. Further information is available by obtaining a copy of the property identification brochure from your local police station.

**DISCLAIMER:** *'This brochure contains general guidelines only for increasing Personal Safety and Security in the Home'. The Queensland Police Service in providing this information makes no representations nor gives any warranty or guarantee concerning the safety of persons or property.*

## How Secure is Your Home?

Use this quick checklist to review your home security.

	YES	NO
• Is your house number clearly visible from the street?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Can offenders be seen in your yard?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Do you have an automatic light timer or sensor activated lights?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Do you leave lights on when you go out?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Have you a phone extension in your bedroom?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Have you keyed in emergency numbers if you own a touchphone?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Are your front and rear doors solid core?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Are your doors fitted with a deadlock/ deadbolt?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Do you have a quality security door?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• If you do not have a security door, do you have a door viewer (peephole)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Are your windows fitted with key operated locks or security grilles?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Are your louvre windows fitted with bars or grilles?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Are your locks keyed alike so that one key opens all doors or windows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• If you have an alarm, is it always used and serviced regularly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Is property engraved or marked for personal identification?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Is your garage locked with quality keyed locks at all times?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Is your meter box locked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Is your garden shed securely locked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you answered NO to many of these questions, you should review your security needs.

# Police Telephone Numbers:

## Non Emergency

Your Local Police Station

Name:

Phone:



## Emergency Only

**000**

**TTY (Tele Typewriter)**  
(Police HQ Brisbane)

**(07) 3364 4655**

**Crime Stoppers**

**1800 333 000**

Crime Stoppers TTY

**(07) 3364 3681**

### Queensland Police Service Vision Statement



We are determined to be a professional police service, dedicated to excellence and committed to working in partnership with the people of Queensland to enhance the safety and security of our community.