



Crime Prevention Tip

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Crime
Prevention
Section

Locks and Burglary Prevention

Burglars prefer to break into a home through a door because it is quick and easy. A good quality lock is a deterrent. When intruders are interviewed about the selection of a target, many say seeing quality deadbolt locks will cause them to move on to another house. A burglar can enter the home through a door using several methods.

- The door can be left unlocked.
- Doors can be kicked in.
- Door locks can be picked.
- Door locks can be hammered until they fall off.
- Doors can be pried open.
- Door frames can be spread apart with a spreader bar.
- Door locks can be "drilled out" using a power drill.
- Locks can be pried off with pipe wrenches or pliers.
- Panes of glass in or beside doors can be broken so the intruder can reach in.
- Sometimes thieves obtain a copy of the house key from an acquaintance.

Remember, the intruder will select the door that looks easiest to break into and that offers the least chance of being seen. Doors going into the garage and going from an attached garage into the house many times offer an intruder the opportunity to hide from view while they are breaking in. Extra thought should go into the security at these locations.

According to a study by the California Crime Technological Research Foundation, the most common techniques used by burglars to enter single-family homes are (from most often used to least often used):

32.00%: through unlocked window or door.

26.64%: Forced entry by impacts.

24.02%: Prying or jimmying.

6.79% Use of pass key or picking the lock.

5.10% Entry attempted, but failed.

5.45%: other or unknown.

Here are some tips to help you protect your home from intruders:

- **Install locks with deadbolts:** In residential construction there are basically two types of bolts used on exterior doors: latch bolts and deadbolts. Some locks combine the two bolts into one.
- **Install locks with an ANSI Grade 1 classification:** There is a grading system that measures the security and durability of door locks. The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) has standards, developed and maintained by The Builders Hardware Manufacturers Association Inc. (BHMA), that comparatively measure the security and durability performance of door locks. *Not all Grade 1 locks are equal.* Different types of door locks are tested differently under ANSI standards. But the grade designation system is the same.

Install locks with key control:

Key control is simply controlling who has copies of keys to your home. Many door keys can be copied at a local hardware or retail store. However, many manufacturers now offer locks using keys that cannot be copied except by certain locksmiths or only by the manufacturer themselves. There are burglaries where the unlawful entry can be traced back to a key that was either knowingly or unwittingly provided to the burglar.

Other door lock features to look for:

Security Strike Plate: A strike plate comes with every door lock. Many times these strike plates are cosmetic and not intended to provide much security. The strike plate's attachment to the doorframe is usually the weakest point in the entire door/doorframe/lock system. High security strike plates are available. They sometimes come with a heavy gauge metal reinforcing plate that mounts under the cosmetic strike plate and come with 3" long screws that secure the strike to the wall framing, not just to the doorframe jamb. The screw holes are staggered so the screws don't penetrate into the same grain of wood. The concept of screwing into different wood grains in the doorframe and wall framing is to make it more difficult to split the wood doorframe or wall framing when the door is impacted. This feature should be considered at every exterior door and at those doors coming from attached garages. Use long screws, at least four that are at two and a half to three inches long in a security strike-plate.

One inch minimum throw for the deadbolt: The throw of the deadbolt is the length that the deadbolt extends out of the door edge. A minimum throw of 1" is recommended. Longer throws makes it more difficult to gain entry by spreading the doorframe.

Remember, good locks are just one piece of many in making your home more secure. If you have any questions or would like a security survey of your residence, please call Deputy Amir Stephen at (720) 874-3752 or contact by e-mail at astephen@co.arapahoe.co.us.