

Common-sense home theft prevention tips

- Store lock boxes or safes in a hidden area of the house. The basement or lowest level is recommended to reduce the risk of heat damage from a fire.
- Keep all personal information (passports, financial statements, etc.) in a locked, fire proof safe or a safety deposit box.
- Close curtains or blinds to prevent thieves from taking inventory of your personal belongings and seeing the home's layout.
- Store ladders, tools and any other outside objects that can be used to assist in home entry in a locked shed or garage.
- Keep garage doors closed and locked. If the garage doors have windows, put the garage door release cord away from those windows.
- Replace worn keypad entry devices. After extensive use, the combination of numbers and letters could be visible, providing criminals with information that can be used to gain access to your home.
- Change the home's entry device access code periodically to prevent wear.
- Make sure the home's address is visible for police, firemen and paramedics for easy identification of the home.
- Don't post the family name on the mailbox or on the house.
- Don't talk about vacation plans in public areas, such as the beauty shop, shopping mall or car rental office.
- Secure a wireless network at home. Computer access could allow cyber criminals easy access to confidential personal information.
- Before placing anything in the garbage, do the following:
 - Shred all papers.
 - Destroy old computer hard drives.
 - Break down all boxes for high value equipment. Brand names on boxes alert thieves to items inside the house.

5 ways to help protect your home from thieves

- Home security system – Deter thieves with noise or an automatic call to the police.
- Proper outside lighting – Thieves may choose to bypass a well-lit home.
- Strong exterior doors – Solid wood or metal provides stronger protection against break-ins.
- Block windows for the basement or locked window well covers – Use these to keep thieves from seeing or entering your basement.
- Locks for pet doors – Make sure your pet door isn't a point of entry for a thief.