



Office of

## Phil Camus, Constable Precinct 5

Harris County, Texas

The crime rate continues to grow at an unprecedented rate, and burglary is the fastest growing of all the index crimes. A burglary occurs in the United States every 10 seconds. Next time, it could be your home, and of the 2.9 billion worth of property stolen this year, only 5% is recovered.

The rules for protecting your home are really quite simple and basic. The best precautionary measures you can take involve old-fashioned common sense and good, modern locks. Use the security survey below to evaluate the security of your home.

1. Does your door have a 180 door view?	Yes	No
2. Are locks that can be opened from inside at least 40 inches from any glass?	Yes	No
3. Are entrance doors solid core?	Yes	No
4. Do entrance doors have dead bolt locks?	Yes	No
5. If hinge pins are outside the door, are they non-removable?	Yes	No
6. Does the door securely fit the door jamb?	Yes	No
7. Is the doorjamb tightly fastened to the 2x4 frame?	Yes	No
8. Is the strike plate tightly fastened to the 2x4 frame?	Yes	No
9. Does the deadbolt extend sufficiently into the strike plate?	Yes	No
10. Have the deadbolt locks been re-keyed since you moved in?	Yes	No
11. Have double hung windows been pinned to prevent prying?	Yes	No
14. Do curtains or drapes fully cover windows?	Yes	No
15. Are window air conditioner units adequately secured from the inside?	Yes	No
16. Does the exterior garage access door close tightly?	Yes	No
17. Do you keep the overhead garage door closed when not in use?	Yes	No
18. Does the overhead garage door have a track padlock?	Yes	No
19. Are padlocks of high quality?	Yes	No
20. Is the hasp of high quality and installed where screws are not visible?	Yes	No
21. Do you remove keys and other valuables from vehicles?	Yes	No
22. Are shrubs cut below window level?	Yes	No
23. Are tree limbs cut above window level?	Yes	No
24. Is the residence number visible from the street?	Yes	No
25. Is the front door well lit?	Yes	No
26. Is the back door well lit?	Yes	No
27. Are your sliding glass doors secured with an auxiliary lock?	Yes	No
28. Are bicycles, mowers and ladders kept locked inside?	Yes	No
29. Have you engraved your property with your Texas Drivers License?	Yes	No
30. Do you keep an inventory of all valuable property and serial numbers?	Yes	No
31. Have you photographed valuable items for easier identification?	Yes	No
32. While on vacation do you have your mail/newspapers picked up?	Yes	No
33. Do you notify Pct5 Constable's that you will be gone?	Yes	No
34. Can your neighbors contact you in case of emergency?	Yes	No
35. Do you set light timers?	Yes	No
36. Is your yard cut so your home looks lived in?	Yes	No
37. Do all windows have auxiliary locks?	Yes	No



## Helpful Safety Tips

When you go for a walk do not wear jewelry but always carry your cellular phone. Also try to walk with at least one friend or family member.

Also make sure that you have Pct. 5 dispatch phone number (**281-463-6666**) stored in your cell phone as a contact.

Be sure to call Pct. 5 dispatch on any and all suspicious activity. Even if you think it may be minor in nature.

The following information was gathered by investigators from several burglary suspects during interviews of recent burglaries in our precinct.

- **Open Garage Door.** If they were looking for a quick steal, especially a car, they would target homes with an open garage door. It was an invitation to these guys to help themselves. Unfortunately, we keep so much of our property in plain view and easy access to the criminal. A lot of us are leaving our keys in the ignition of our vehicles thinking, it is safe in our own garage. But it is not. The guys were in and out in a matter of seconds.
- **Porch Lights.** The suspects would drive around the neighborhoods and look for homes which had the porch lights on during the middle of the day. This indicated that no one was home because we leave our lights on in anticipation of arriving home after dark. I would recommend motion sensors for those of us who routinely arrive home at night. It will save you money on electricity, provide a deterrent for when someone is peaking into your home, and it removes this particular "flag" from your home.
- **Mail and Papers.** We all pay the price for convenience. A paper in the driveway in the mid afternoon signals to these guys that the home owner leaves early and isn't home yet. Further, when they saw the paper or the porch light, they always checked the mail box to see if the mail was still there. This was another indication that no one was home. It is difficult to control the mail scenario, but we can protect ourselves from the newspaper flag.
- **Answer the door knock.** I cannot stress enough the importance of answering the door knock in the middle of the day. These guys knew that if no one answered the door when they knocked, chances are they were not home and it was ok to make entry into the home. I do not recommend opening your door and speaking to strangers. However, it is imperative that you acknowledge them by speaking to them through your locked door.
- **Garage Side Doors.** When the guys decided which home to target and performed the "knock test", they would jump the fence to the home and check the side door to the garage. We were told, "no one locks their side garage door". Once inside the garage, they typically had access to the home or at the very least, the car.



- Alarms. I was very surprised to learn that the alarms were not a deterrent to the guys. They knew they could be in and out of the house long before anyone could respond to the alarm. If they knew the home had an alarm, they would cut the power to the home via the breaker box. Even if this set off the alarm, it did not matter to them. Again, they would be in and out in a matter of minutes.
- Dogs. This was the best deterrent. However, one of the home owners burglarized had a dog. Unfortunately, his dog is extremely loving. We did see though, that they were more mindful of homes with loud barking dogs.
- Routine. The most troubling fact I think we learned, was how much time these guys spent conducting surveillance on the neighborhoods and how well they paid attention to our daily lives. They learned our patterns and routines. They knew when we left to take our kids to school, what day of the week we went grocery shopping, how we park our cars in the driveway if our husband or wife was not home, how long does it take us to work out at the gym, and so on. We are victims of human nature. We carry on day after day, living our lives in systematic routine patterns, and never giving a thought to how our comfortable and convenient existence is an open book to the predators walking amongst us. **SPICE UP YOUR LIVES.** Do the unexpected. Indulge in the unplanned. Live your life and embrace the unforeseen obstacles, because only through changes in our routine lifestyles will we break the cycle of predictability that allows us to be preyed upon.