



Dedicated to Quality & Safety in Housing & Construction<sup>®</sup> Since 1961

Listen to "The Gurus of How-To" & Support Public Radio.



ACCURATE BUILDING INSPECTORS<sup>®</sup>  
Division of Ubell Enterprises, Inc.

Servicing: New York<sup>1</sup>, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts

Toll Free: 1-800-640-8285

1860 Bath Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11214-4616

## Home Security Checklist A Household Safety Guide

## Family Circle Articles

### "Is Your Home An Easy Mark?"

By Al Ubell and Label Shulman

Published August 19, 1986 - Family Circle Magazine

Updated August 21, 2005

**Y**ou lock the door. You close the windows. And when you're away, you ask a neighbor to keep an eye peeled for trouble. But is that enough to make your home burglarproof? Take our security check - you may be in for a shock!

This year alone, over 2 million households will report a burglary, based on projections by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, and property worth almost \$2 billion will be stolen. How much of that booty will come from your home? Is this your year to become a victim? Or, are you willing to put a little time, thought and money into protecting your home?

In over 40% of burglaries, the thief simply walks in through an unlocked door or crawls in through an unlocked basement or ground-floor window. And even when entryways are secured, most locks can still be picked or snapped by applying pressure to the door or window frame. But, if your home is properly protected, the chances of its being broken into decrease significantly.

Take a few minutes right now to answer the questions in the following checklist, and you'll be able to evaluate the effectiveness of your present home security. Give yourself 25 points for each yes answer; 0 points for each no. And if a particular question doesn't apply to your house or apartment, give yourself the points as a gift.

### Your Home Security Check

1. Do you have bright outdoor lights on all sides of your house for night time security?
2. Are the outdoor lights installed high up under the eaves of your house to prevent their being stolen or vandalized?
3. Are the outdoor lights hooked up to automatic controls (either clock or photoelectric timers)?
4. Is shrubbery near your doors and windows trimmed low enough to prevent thieves from hiding behind it?
5. Do you keep valuables out of sight to anyone looking in your ground-floor windows?
6. When you're away blinds or draperies closed to prevent thieves from "casing" the inside of your house?

### Doors

1. Are all exterior doors made of solid-core wood or metal?



2. Are door frames made of solid wood or metal?
3. Are all locks on exterior doors either the deadbolt or jimmy-proof type?
4. Do exterior doors have eye-level, wide-angle viewers (or peepholes) through which you can identify callers?
5. Are any glass panels on exterior doors made of either shatterproof or double-glazed glass?
6. Are any sliding glass doors made of shatter proof glass or new, break resistant plastic sheeting?
7. Does each sliding glass door have a bolt-type lock (to prevent it from being lifted out of its track), as well as a jamming bar in the lower track?
8. Are all secondary doors (garage-to-house or garage-to-basement) equipped with secure locks?
9. If you've recently bought or rented your home, have you changed all the locks and lock cylinders?
10. Have you made sure not to attach any identification to your key chain, so that if you lose your keys, they cannot be traced to your address?

## Windows

1. Are windows equipped with at least a simple spring lock?
2. Do windows have an ) additional locking device (keyed bolt latch, nail or bolt drilled into frame)?
3. Are exterior storm windows equipped with latches as an added deterrent?
4. If you have bars on basement or other windows, are they installed inside the windows and do they have quick-release mechanisms for escape in a fire emergency?

## The Cost Of Burglar Proofing Your Home

Like many homeowners, you may be reluctant to upgrade your home security because of the expense. But the fact is that with a little do-it-yourself ingenuity, you can get a total home-security setup for around \$400 and good, pickproof locks for much less. Since most burglaries are committed by amateurs who want to get in and out quickly, securing your house even slightly is usually enough to discourage them.

We've put together a price guide, at right, based on information from major manufacturers, that will give you an idea of the cost of securing your home. Prices given here establish a range, but since the exact cost will vary from one area to another and from supplier to supplier, be sure to shop around. Also check with your homeowners' insurance agent to find out which, if any, home security devices may qualify you for a reduction in your premiums. Many companies offer discounts of from 2% to 15% to clients who take specific precautions against burglary.

As you read this chart, think about the kinds of security most appropriate for your particular home or apartment. Unless you have "known valuables", such as priceless oil paintings, an expensive gun collection, diamond necklaces or other jewels, you don't need to invest thousands of dollars in an elaborate electronic system. In most cases, a few hundred dollars-spent wisely on locks, lights and a modest burglar alarm-will buy all the home security you need.

## Your Home Security Price Guide: Device or Hardware

Device or Hardware	Professional Installation Cost	Do-It-Yourself Cost
Outdoor spotlight sets (varying number of lights per set)	\$50 - \$100 per set	\$15 - \$60 per set
Photoelectric or timer controls for outdoor	\$100 per unit	\$25 - \$50 per unit

<b>Device or Hardware</b>	<b>Professional Installation Cost</b>	<b>Do-It-Yourself Cost</b>
lights		
Automatic electronic clock timers for Indoor lamps	-----	\$15 - \$25 each
Wall switch electronic clock timers for ceiling fixtures	\$100 each	\$15 - \$25 each
Programmable home lighting control system (central control for all lights in your home)	\$100 - \$1,000	\$50 - \$500
Solid-core wood or metal doors	\$200 - \$500 each	\$175 - \$300 each
Dead-bolt door locks	\$45 - \$175 each	\$15 - \$60 each
Floor bolts for doors	\$50	\$13
Floor angle bars	\$100 each	\$35 each
Door viewers	\$35 - \$50	\$2 - \$12 each
Jamming bars for sliding glass doors	\$35 each	\$9 - \$11 each (or use broomsticks cut to size for free)
Sliding-door track locks	\$35 - \$50 each	\$10 - \$15 each
High-security cylinders	\$50 - \$100 each	\$20 - \$60 each
Nail or bolt in window frame	\$10 per window	10¢ - \$1 per window
Keyed window locks	\$25 each	\$3 - \$10 each
Window bars or gate (fire department-approved)	\$325 - \$400 per window	\$200 per window
Door and window alarms (battery operated, electric plug-in or wind-up types)	\$35 - \$50	\$15 per door or window
Wireless perimeter alarm system	\$500 and up	\$300 and up
Hard-wired perimeter alarm system	\$2,000- \$5,000 and up	\$1,500 and up
Both alarm systems can accommodate these accessories:		
- audio detectors	\$200 each	\$100 each
- Infrared electric eyes	\$250 per pair	\$150 per pair
- floor-mat detectors	\$75 - \$150 each	\$30 - \$75 each
- ultrasonic motion detectors	\$200 - \$250 each	\$130 - \$150 each
- microwave sensing devices	\$200 - \$250 each	\$125 - \$150 each
- outside bell or home alarms	\$50 - \$75 each	\$25 - \$50 each
Silent alarm, connected to police or central station	\$500 - \$1,000 and up ( + monthly service charge)	\$25 - \$50 each Not a D-I-Y job

\* Can run on batteries or be plugged into an outlet.

\*\* Wires are run through the walls and ceilings of your house.

**NOTE:** Most of the hardware and devices listed here are readily available at home centers and well stocked hardware stores. For any large installation job, get bids from several reputable home security contractors. Your local police department will be able to advise you.

Get additional advice on home alarm systems and security devices from the article [Burglar-Proof Your Home](#).



---

Copyright © Alvin Ubell, Label Shulman & Family Circle Magazine - 1986  
Accurate Building Inspectors®  
[www.AccurateBuilding.com](http://www.AccurateBuilding.com)

<sup>1</sup> ABI's inspectors are licensed in New Jersey, Connecticut, & Massachusetts. Legislation for licensing of home inspectors is pending in New York State.  
Copyright © 2004-2005 Ubell Enterprises, Inc. All Rights Reserved. [Terms of Use](#). [Privacy Policy](#).