

Burglary and Your Business

Burglars choose targets that are easily accessible -- protect your business by making it uninviting to a burglar and making it hard to gain entry. You should take measures to increase the likelihood the burglar will get caught if they do try to enter your business. Finally, if the burglar is able to gain entry, you can limit the amount of loss by making it hard to remove valuable items.

Make Your Business Uninviting to Intruders

Lighting -- Intruders like to work in the cover of darkness. Good interior and exterior lighting is one of the most effective deterrents against crime. Pay special attention to areas that are not in plain view -- where intruders often try to make entry. Protect exterior lighting fixtures against breakage and replace damaged or burned-out bulbs.

Keep valuable merchandise illuminated, but away from display windows where they could be a target of a quick "smash and grab."

Exterior -- Overgrown shrubbery, vehicles and trash dumpsters near the building provide excellent cover for burglars. Keeping trees and shrubs trimmed away from windows and doors can help minimize hiding places around buildings.

Make it Hard for a Burglar to Gain Entry

Windows -- Exterior windows can be covered with burglar-resistant glazing. This provides the appearance of glass and increases security.

Many window locks are simply latches that can be pried open. Ask a locksmith or security supplier how you can select more secure window locks.

Doors -- Consider installing exterior doors constructed from solid-core wood or metal that fit tightly into the doorframe. A heavy-duty deadbolt lock with a heavy-duty strike plate can be installed using three-inch screws that penetrate the wall stud. This will provide extra strength if a criminal tries to kick open the door.

Side and rear doors should be of solid wood or steel construction and installed in reinforced steel frames. Avoid using doors with hinge pins on the outside where they can be easily removed. Equip outward swinging doors with hinges that have non-removable pins. Secure overhead garage-type doors with padlocks on the roller channel.

Barriers -- Fencing provides a barrier that may help deter would be intruders.

Increase the Chances That an Intruder Will Be Caught

An alarm system is one way you can help protect your property and residents against burglary. There are a variety of different alarms available ranging from very basic local alarms to highly sophisticated systems.

Listings and Certifications -- Check equipment for Underwriters Laboratories (UL) listing or other agency approval to assure that it meets quality standards.

Detection Equipment -- Alarms can involve protection of the perimeter, area, or object. Perimeter protection covers the outside surface of the building. Area protection covers an entire space or area -- such as the inside of a building. Object protection covers a particular object -- such as a safe.

Alarm System Monitoring -- More complex systems offer a monitoring service that notifies the authorities when the system detects a burglar. Other systems are designed to transmit an alarm directly to a police station. The latter is only available in communities where there is a special alarm panel at the police station.

Maintenance and Service -- Regular testing and maintenance will help ensure the alarm system is functioning properly. A testing and maintenance contract is one of the requirements for UL certification. Consult a security expert for advice on which system is best for your property. If you have an alarm system, be sure to prominently display decals and signs indicating it is present.

Make it Hard for the Burglar to Remove Valuable Items

Even if your business does not stock valuable items, consider the money or checks you routinely handle. Deposit large amounts of money in the bank as soon as possible, but if you must keep substantial amounts, keep these in a safe for protection from burglars and fires.

Safes are classified as either fire resistive or burglary resistive and are rated for performance by Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. Select a safe based on the values to be protected. A higher level of protection should be chosen for high value merchandise or large amounts of money.

By anchoring a safe in a well-lit area, there's a better chance burglars would be noticed if they tried to open or remove the safe.

Note: A common fire safe, including an older, unlabeled safe, offers little or no burglary protection -- only fire protection