

Port Wentworth
G E O R G I A

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BURGLARY PREVENTION

Tips & Information from the
City of Port Wentworth Police Department



BURGLARY PREVENTION

Although all of us fear personal violence, the odds for being physically attacked in Port Wentworth are extremely low. There is, however, one serious crime to which every person is vulnerable; the crime of burglary.

Unfortunately, you will not be able to tell if a person is or isn't a burglar. Your only defense is to create an environment in which burglaries are less likely to occur. This can be accomplished by methods of physical security, the outside appearance of your residence, and by neighborhood and police cooperation.

Most burglars are lazy. They also fear being detected and will avoid making any more noise than is absolutely necessary. The simple and relatively inexpensive attachment of effective locks on your doors and windows should be enough to discourage the average burglar from attempting to victimize your residence.

Listed below are proven methods which should discourage most burglars from turning your possessions into their profits.

BOLT LOCKS

A "Thumb Turn Deadlock" can be used on all exterior doors where windows are not in or near the door. Exterior doors should be of "solid core" construction. The bolt should have at least a one inch "case hardened" throw and the strike plate must be attached securely through the door frame into the home structure using at least 1-1/2 inch "case hardened" screws.

SLIDING GLASS DOORS

The most inexpensive way to secure a sliding glass door is to insert 1-1/2 inch pan head (large head) sheet metal screws into the top of the doorframe at both ends and in the middle. Adjust the screws so that the door barely clears them when it is operated. In addition, insert a dowel stick into the door track. This will keep the door from being lifted and removed from the track and from being forced open. The most effective protection for this type of door is a sliding bolt with a locking device.

PORCH OR PATIO DOORS

Treat porch and patio doors as any other outside door. Since they are usually more hidden from view from the street or by your neighbors, extra care should be used to secure them.

BURGLARY PREVENTION

DOUBLE HUNG SASH WINDOWS

An easy, inexpensive way to secure your windows is to use the “pin” trick. Drill an angled hole through the top frame of the lower window partially into the frame of the upper window. Then insert a nail or an eyebolt. The window can't be opened until you remove the nail. Make a second set of holes with windows partly open so you can have ventilation without inviting intruders. Eyebolts can provide strong resistance against jimmying. If you live in a high crime area, it might be best to use them.

CASEMENT OR LOUVERED WINDOWS

Removing the crank handle when the window is closed will offer some protection by preventing the entire window from being opened once one section is removed. When the handle is removed, keep it at least forty inches (40”) away from the window so that it is out of the burglar's reach.

SLIDING WINDOWS

Sliding windows should be protected in the same way as a sliding glass door.

ADDITIONAL SECURITY SUGGESTIONS ALARMS

There are many types of alarms available commercially. The most important factor in selecting an alarm is to determine what your individual needs are and then select an alarm which will best meet these needs. Deal only with a licensed, bonded alarm company that installs Underwriters Laboratory (UL) approved equipment. The Town of Wethersfield regulates alarm installations in the town. See our Alarm Ordinance page.

LIGHTING

To prevent a burglar from concealing his activities, install exterior lighting to illuminate all doors and windows. Numerous commercial ornamental and functional lights are available with sensors or timers that will turn the lights on and off.

YARDS

Thick foliage provides the burglar with a place to work undetected. Keep shrubs away from all doors and

BURGLARY PREVENTION

windows. Large trees near the house should be well pruned so that the tree will not provide access to the second floor of the residence. Keep all ladders locked inside the garage when not being used. Make your home look like someone is there even when you are gone by having the grass cut in the summer months and the snow removed from the sidewalk and driveway in winter months.

MAILBOX

Do not display your name on the mailbox. A burglar will be able to locate your telephone number from it and call your house to see if you are home.

Garage

Remember to always keep your garage door closed. This will prevent thefts from your garage. When it is left open, a burglar can tell by the number of cars who is and who is not at home. Once a burglar is inside the garage, he can work on your house or property undetected.

SOLID DOORS

The insertion of an inexpensive door viewer will allow you to determine in advance whether the door should be opened for an otherwise unknown person ringing your bell.

NEIGHBORHOOD RELATIONS

Your best security device is your neighbor. Arrangements should be made with your neighbors to report any person or condition that is not consistent with the neighborhood. Statistics show that in neighborhoods where residents are concerned with their mutual safety, crime rates are lower. Advise your neighbors when you will be gone for an extended period of time. Ask them to report anything out of the ordinary to the police immediately. Your police department can check out suspicious vehicles or persons in minutes while it may take days/years to solve the burglary and by then the stolen items have probably been sold.

KEY SECURITY

The best lock available will not prevent a burglary if the security of the key is neglected. An experienced burglar is aware of the common places a resident chooses to conveniently "hide" a house key. Instead of trying to hide a house key, trust a neighbor and give them the extra key for your house. Remember to remove other keys from your ring when cars are taken in for service and left in parking lots. Burglars have been known

BURGLARY PREVENTION

to duplicate house keys while the resident never realized what happened.

BURGLARY “IN PROGRESS”

If you return home and find a door or window unexpectedly open or ajar, don't go in. Go to your nearest neighbor and contact the police. If you are inside your home and hear or see a prowler, don't investigate! Call the police! Upon notification, the police will send an officer to your house in minutes to handle this type of problem. If possible, watch from a distance and keep the police dispatcher informed of the person's actions.

BICYCLES

Thefts of bicycles is a growing problem, largely due to the increase in popularity of the bicycle as a means of transportation. The town requests that all bicycles be licensed. Once a license has been issued, the police department has on file all information necessary to identify the bicycle if it is either lost or stolen. In addition, the placement of the license itself on the bicycle serves as a deterrent to the bicycle thief who knows that if he is caught with the bicycle it can be identified as stolen. Remember to always secure your bicycle with an adequate lock when not in use. Many bicycles are stolen when they have been left unlocked in the yard or in an open garage. If your bicycle is stolen, it should be reported to the police department as soon as possible.

COMMON BURGLARY TECHNIQUES

Often a burglar will drive or walk through a subdivision looking for a home that appears unoccupied. This can be determined by clues such as an open garage without cars, an accumulation of mail or newspapers, packages of dry cleaning left at the front door, or notes stuck on the door. The burglar will then approach the residence and ring the doorbell. If a resident answers, the burglar may pretend to be lost and ask for directions.

If you have someone approach your home in this manner, call the police immediately. Try to get a description of the person and any involved vehicle, along with a license plate number if possible to pass on to the police. The police will verify the story and offer any necessary assistance.

This document is provided courtesy of the City of Port Wentworth, Georgia.

For more information, please visit us online at www.cityofportwentworth.com.