
BERNALILLO COUNTY
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

BURGLARY PREVENTION

This information has been prepared to help reduce or eliminate the potential that your residence or business will be the victim(s) of a Burglary. The following are suggestions that may prevent such a crime. It is important that you understand the necessary steps to prevent a burglary.

Nature of Burglary: Burglary is a felony crime that has the lowest clearance rate among all property crimes. Burglary is not a sophisticated crime; it's a crime of opportunity. Burglars don't choose victims, they choose opportunities! Be safe! Be Smart! Don't be a Victim!

Prevention:

To make your residence and business safe:

Make sure all your exterior doors have good locks - at least dead-bolt locks with a minimum one-inch throw.

Use the locks you have. Always lock up when you go out, even if only for a few minutes.

Make sure outside doors are solid, 1 ¾ inch metal or hardwood.

Secure sliding glass doors with commercially available bars or locks, or put a wooden dowel or broom handle in the door track. A screw partially seated in the overhead track will prevent the doors from being lifted out.

Make sure your windows have good locks - particularly those at ground level. Lock double-hung windows by sliding a small-headed bolt or nail through a hole drilled at a slight downward angle in a top corner of the inside sash and partway into the outside sash.

Make sure all porches, entrances, and outside areas are well lighted. Business owners should leave a security light on inside their business so officers can see inside when doing business checks.

Trim any bushes or trees that hide doors or windows. Keep ladders and tools inside when you're not using them. Keep lawn chairs and tables away from under windows.

Don't hide your house keys under the doormat or in a flower pot (that's the first place burglars look!) Rather, give an extra key to a trusted neighbor or friend.

Get an (inexpensive) engraver and mark valuable property with an identifier of your choosing. (Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office Does Not Suggest you use your social security number due to the potential for identity fraud.)

Make a list of your property to include make, model, color, serial number, personal identifier if completed and estimated value. This list should be

updated every year and should be put away in a safe place such as with a friend or in a safe deposit box. This is also a smart idea in case you have a fire. This information will possibly help in the recovery of your property. Photographing and/or videotaping your possessions are a convenient way to keep a record of what you own.

Consider installing an alarm system for summoning emergency help. If you install an alarm system remember to activate each and every time you leave or close up for the day.

Call your police Community Resource Officer to do a free safety assessment of your property.

If you live in an apartment:

Do your part to see that entrances, parking areas, hallways, stairways, laundry rooms, and other common areas are well lighted. Mailboxes should be in a publicly traveled, well lighted area.

Make sure fire stairs are locked from the stairwell side with an appropriate emergency release mechanism. Laundry rooms and storage areas should be kept locked.

In a security building, always assure you know the person buzzing your apartment before allowing them to enter the building.

When you go away:

Ask a neighbor to collect your mail and newspapers, and offer to return the favor, or place a stop delivery order with the post office and newspaper.

Put an automatic timer on at least two lights and a radio. Consider photoelectric sensors to turn outside lights on and off automatically.

Tell a trusted neighbor when you're leaving and when you'll return. Include an itinerary and phone numbers where you can be reached in an emergency.

If You Discover a Burglary:

If you arrive home and find your door open or you discover your residence or business has been entered:

Do not enter. Back off and go to a neighbor's house, or nearby business and call the police (911). Don't make the assumption that maybe you forgot to close the door when you left, or perhaps it did not latch when you pulled it closed or the possibility that you may have forgot to lock it. Call the police from a position of safety and let them investigate. Some people, when finding an open door, realize that they may have been burglarized, but make the false assumption that the burglars have already gone. These people then rush into the house to find out what the burglar might have taken. By doing this you may destroy valuable evidence needed in the investigation. Whenever you find a door or a window unexpectedly open, treat it as if the house is being burglarized and the burglar is still in the house.

If you find your residence or business has been burglarized and the suspects have left, leave the residence or business as suggested. Do not go through the house looking to see what is missing or to see what type of damage has been done. By doing this you may destroy valuable evidence that will be used in the investigation to prove who is responsible for the crime. If you have touched things let the reporting officer know what items were touched so, he can document it in his report. The officer may at some point have you enter the residence with him to help him determine what is and isn't out of place and to determine what is missing.

If you enter your home or business and find it is being burglarized:

Remember, burglars like to come in when no one is home. If you interrupt a burglar, remember the suspect(s) are as afraid as you are and have a lot more to lose since they have been discovered. If the burglar wants to leave let him do so. Keep your cool, leave the residence immediately if you can without being hurt or caught. "Do Not" under any circumstances attempt to apprehend the suspect(s) yourself. Remember material things can be replaced, YOUR LIFE CAN NOT.

Remember that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure! Take some time and go through your residence or business to see if it is as safe as it could be.