



A weekly question/answer column

How Can I Keep My Home More Secure?

Leona K. Hawks answers:*

The most common place for an intruder to enter the house is through the front door. Don't let your house be an easy target by being careless or by putting off simple measures that will safeguard your home. And remember the obvious — keep doors and windows locked when not in use.

- **Doors** — Exterior doors should be of solid wood or metal construction at least 1 3/4 inches thick. Check the strike plate to be sure screws are long enough to go all the way through the frame and into the wall stud so the strike plate can't be broken out of the door frame.
- **Glass and windows** — Glass in and around doors is often used to break into a house. If you have glass large enough to reach through and within 40 inches of any locking part of the door, consider covering it with protective grillwork, break-resistant materials, acrylic or other types of plastic. Windows can be pinned shut for increased security.
- **Sliding glass doors** — Install spacers or protruding screw heads in the grooves over the door to prevent removal. Check the latches to be sure they are strong and working properly. Place a piece of pipe or a broom handle on the inside bottom grooves to prevent the door from being opened if the latch is broken.
- **Garages** — Lock garages and storage buildings with padlocks or dead bolt locks. Lock ladders inside the garage so they are not accessible to a thief.
- **Locks** — A latch operated by the door knob offers some security, but dead bolts offer the most security. The dead bolt should stick out of the lock more than 1/2 inch. A chain lock that can withstand force is another good security measure.
- **Hinges** — A well-secured hinge protects a home against two types of entry: forcing the door out of the frame by applying pressure to the hinged side, or by removing the hinge pins and lifting the door out of its frame. If you have a door that opens outward, consider changing it if the hinge pins are exposed and accessible.

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