



Staying safe at home

Don't forget your garage

Garages are a favourite target for burglars — they contain valuable items such as vehicles, garden tools and bicycles, and they're often left open and unattended. The Calgary Police Service suggests these simple tips to help prevent thefts from garages:

Protect your valuables: Put curtains or blinds up to cover any windows in the garage, so thieves can't look for items to steal, or see if your vehicle is there.

Make it secure: The person-door between your house and attached garage should swing inward into the garage, be solid core, and have a deadbolt lock. The same goes for other exterior person-doors on your garage.

Don't give thieves an open invitation: Keep your overhead door closed and your other garage doors locked, even when you are at home — this includes the door between your home and an attached garage.

Check your locks: Secure your person-doors with deadbolts (which need to be operated from the outside with a key).

Make it bright: Install lights near your garage to keep the area around doors and windows lit: These can be motion sensor or photo (light) sensitive, so that they turn on automatically when someone walks past or when the sun sets.

Put up a number: Put your house number on your garage, especially if it opens up into a back alley. This helps emergency personnel to identify which house is yours.

Keep records: Catalogue your garage's contents, including serial numbers of valuable items and vehicle identification numbers. Taking photographs, videos or digital recordings of contents can also help police and your insurance company if there's a break-in, fire, or flood.

Double-check: Never drive away without checking that your overhead garage door is down. Disconnect your automatic garage door opener when you're out of town. Also check the operation of automatic doors for safety (read your instruction booklet or contacts the door's manufacturer for details).

Upgrade garage door openers: If you have an older-model automatic garage door opener, consider upgrading it. Older models use a remote signal that's set at the factory and will open any door with the same code. Thieves can cruise neighbourhoods, using stolen remotes to randomly click on houses until a garage door opens. Newer garage door models use "rolling" codes that change automatically.

For more crime prevention tips, visit the Calgary Police Service website at www.calgarypolice.ca