



## **Staying safe at home**

*Protect your home from the outside in*

Many house break-and-enters are committed by culprits looking for easy opportunities — if you take those opportunities away, you can help protect yourself and your property. The Calgary Police Service suggests these quick and easy ways to help protect your home:

**Start outside:** Trim plants in your yard to eliminate potential hiding places for burglars. Consider using a type of fence that offers a compromise between privacy and visibility. If you're in a condo or apartment, how easy would it be for someone to climb in through one of your windows?

**Show your pride:** Keep your yard maintained to give the house a lived-in, cared-for appearance. Cut the grass, plant flowers, and remove dead branches and debris. This sends the message that you care about your home and your neighbourhood.

**Light it up:** Install exterior lights to brighten dark areas around doors or windows to make them more easily seen by passersby. Motion-sensor and photo (light) sensitive lights can help. Also make sure that emergency personnel can easily see your address from the street and back alley, even at night.

**Lock it up:** Keep house doors locked when you're inside. When you're out in your back yard, keep your front door and windows locked — and vice versa. Also, keep garage doors closed and locked.

**Check your doors:** Exterior doors and frames should be made of wood or steel, which are harder to force open than hollow-core doors. Frames around outside doors should fit snugly against the door. Glass in outside doors should be at least 1 metre or 40 inches from the lock or be unbreakable. If you don't have glass in the door, install a peephole viewer so that you can see who is outside without opening your door.

**Use deadbolt-style locks:** Secure all outside doors with deadbolt locks (which require a key to lock and unlock them from outside). Reinforce the locks with longer screws and strikeplates to make them less vulnerable to being forced open. Door hinges should be attached securely by screws that go through the door frame into the supporting stud — the hinges shouldn't be exposed on the outside.

**Double-check your windows:** Take a close look at your windows, to see how they operate and how they lock. If any of the locks are broken or no longer work properly, replace them. To keep sliding doors and windows from being lifted out of their tracks, limit clearance by installing screws that protrude down from the top track.

**Putting it all together:** You can take other measures to help you keep your home safe: Consider installing a monitored alarm system to warn you of dangers such as break-ins, fires or carbon monoxide poisoning, for example. It's easy for people to see inside your home at night when the lights are on, so keep window coverings closed during night-time hours. And always close and lock any windows that could be used to gain access to your home while you're sleeping.

For more crime prevention tips, visit the Calgary Police Service website at [www.calgarypolice.ca](http://www.calgarypolice.ca)