



Why Burglary Prevention?

Burglary is simply defined as “to enter or remain unlawfully with intent to commit a crime.” Anyone who has been the victim of a burglary knows that the loss is much more than a financial loss. The loss of personal items with sentimental value and the feelings of having your home violated go beyond what the police can recover or what your insurance company is able to compensate you for. Precious heirlooms and your peace of mind may be lost forever.

So, what can we do to help prevent a burglary? Perhaps by understanding the burglar, we can better learn to reduce the odds that a burglar will target your home. As a general rule, common burglars look for homes that make ‘easy’ targets. Homes that practice tested crime prevention techniques are less likely to become targets than those that don’t. Crime prevention experts recognize “the three minute rule.” What this means, is that a burglar will spend about three minutes attempting to gain entry to a residence. As the entry time increases, so does the chance of detection of the burglar. If you can prevent a burglar’s entry beyond this limit, chances are increased that he will move to another target. This is the foundation of all crime prevention techniques.

Our goal in the DeWitt Police Department is to significantly reduce residential burglaries. To achieve this goal, we must look to the community for help. This brochure contains many tips and techniques for burglary prevention. Please take a few moments to carefully review this information and take the necessary steps to reduce your chances of becoming a victim of a burglary. If you have questions, please give us a call. Thank you.

What Can I do?

1. Locks. Doors and windows should be locked at all times. Single or double cylinder deadbolts should be used on all exterior doors. Deadbolts should have a minimum one inch throw (distance bolt inserts into door frame). Windows should be locked at all times. Basement windows should be ‘barred.’ There are devices that permit windows to be partially open while remaining locked. Locksmiths and hardware store employees can assist you in choosing quality hardware.

2. Lighting. Exterior lights should be positioned to illuminate the object you want protected. Lighting doorways, windows or the entire home exterior is effective. Lighting your lawn, garden or driveway creates shadows that provide excellent cover for burglars. Interior lights with automatic timers give the illusion of several persons being home.

3. Appearance. When you are away from home, give your home a “lived in” look. Cancel newspapers and mail service until you return. Have a neighbor take the trash out and then return the cans to a secure place. Interior lights, televisions and radios can be put on automatic timers to simulate your being home. Park a second car or ask a neighbor to park in your driveway. This will add to the illusion.

4. Your Yard. Do not leave ladders, tools, wood piles or trash cans around your yard. These items can assist a burglar in gaining entry to your home.

5. Environmental Design. Landscaping and fences should be designed to give a clear view of your home. These items can provide cover to a burglar while they force entry to your residence. Avoid placement that will conceal a burglar from view of neighbors or the police.

6. Spare Keys. Hiding spare keys outside is not recommended. Burglars usually check for these keys first. Leaving a key with a trusted neighbor can help in an emergency.

7. Neighbors. Being a good neighbor and encouraging your neighbors to keep their eyes open is helpful. If you or a neighbor observes or hears anything suspicious, call the DeWitt Police Department. Your call may prevent a burglary.

8. Alarms. When installed and used properly, alarms are very effective in reducing or preventing burglaries. Make sure that your alarm meets your individual lifestyle needs. Contact several installers and get estimates before proceeding with the installation. Have the installer demonstrate the alarm and all of its functions.

9. Safe Deposit Boxes. Expensive jewelry, art and other items of value should be kept in more secure environments. These items may attract professional burglars who are capable of defeating alarms and home safes.

10. Keep records. Make a list of all your valuable property. Include serial numbers, make/model, dates of purchase, value and any owner applied numbers. Photographs and video recordings are very helpful when it comes time to identify the property and making insurance claims.

11. Operation I.D. Valuables should be marked with an owner applied number. This number enables police to track stolen property when serial numbers have been removed or are unavailable. These numbers also assist police when it comes to returning recovered stolen property. Engravers may be purchased at local department stores or

they may be obtained at the Town of DeWitt Police Department for temporary use. Please call ahead to ensure availability.

Our Pledge

The Town of DeWitt Police Department is dedicated to community service. We offer several programs designed specifically for our community aimed at reducing burglaries. These programs include:

- 1. Property Checks.** When you are away from home for extended periods of time, we will list your home in our 'Patrol Post' book. When time permits, the officer working in your neighborhood may conduct periodic checks of your home's exterior. To list your home, please call our administrative number (449-3640) during regular business hours or complete the On-line Property Check Form prior to your departure. The On-line Property Check Form must be delivered personally to the Town of DeWitt Police Department by the property owner. Be sure to relay the dates you will be away, emergency contacts, and any important information relating to your home.
- 2. Security Surveys.** The Town of DeWitt Police Department can, at the request of the homeowner, conduct a security survey of your home. This survey consists of a physical inspection of your home to determine how you can reduce your chances of becoming the victim of a burglary. This survey is confidential to the homeowner. The Town of DeWitt Police Department does not keep records regarding the results of the inspection. It will be necessary for the homeowner to be present during the inspection process. If you would like a security survey of your home, or if you have any questions regarding the home security survey, you may contact the Town of DeWitt Police department at 449-3640.
- 3. Community Policing.** The Town of DeWitt Police Department is a "Community Policing" police department. The main goal of Community Policing is to establish relationships with individual neighborhoods so that the police and the community can work together on common concerns and issues affecting your specific neighborhood. We recognize that different neighborhoods have individual concerns and issues. These issues may include crime prevention, block watch programs, and all quality of life issues affecting your neighborhood. Together as partners, the police and the community can work together to solve our problems. If you and your neighborhood are interested in our Community Policing program, you can contact a Community Policing Team Officer at 449-3640.