



Residential Security Checklist

Town of Portola Valley

765 Portola Road

Portola Valley, CA 94028

(650) 851-1700

portolavalley.net

No house is absolutely burglar-proof if professional burglars are set on breaking in. However, there is much you can do to make your home a less inviting and interesting target for property crime, as burglars would be the first to admit that you can discourage burglars if you tighten up your home security. You can begin this process by identifying weak areas and fixing them.

This checklist will assist you in systematically surveying your home to make the necessary changes to reduce the potential for such a crime. Complying with these suggestions will not guarantee that your home will never be burglarized, but it will certainly make your home a less desirable target.

Any security measure you decide upon should not impede other important factors, such as ease of escape from a room, home or yard in case of a fire or other emergency. All things, including your personal lifestyle, should be weighed in your decision-making process.

Some of the measures are listed under the most logical heading (Windows, Doors, Exterior, etc.) though it may apply to more than one area. Please work through entire survey for best results.

It is important take a critical look at your home security every three to four months. Do not become lax; crime prevention is a continuous process.

Please check Town of Portola Valley guidelines for lighting and landscaping specifications to ensure appropriate compliance with the Town's municipal code; feel free to call us if you have any questions.

Special thanks to San Mateo County and Santa Clara County Sheriff's Offices for the use of their materials in the preparation of this checklist.

YES	NO	EXTERIOR OF THE HOME
		Are entry areas unobstructed by shrubbery and other décor to permit maximum visibility by your neighbors?
		Are your trees and shrubs trimmed to eliminate hiding places?
		Are plants cut below windowsill level, and no more than two feet tall?
		Are lighting fixture protective-lenses vandal-resistant?
		Have you made sure that low-mounted lighting cannot be compromised by simply unscrewing a bulb?
		Are lights installed around the perimeter of the home? (See Town code.)
		Are lights installed around the perimeter of the home controlled by photocell or motion detector? (See Town code.)
		Is your house number easily visible from the street?
		Have you made it more difficult for the burglar by locking up your ladder, cutting tree limbs, and avoiding trellises, sheds and drain pipes that can be used as a ladder for access to the second floor or roof?
		Have you taken your name(s) off the outside of your home?
		Are telephone and power lines to the home located high enough so they are not easily accessible?
		Are electrical switch boxes secured?
		Are your side gates kept locked when not in use?
		Do you have a locking mailbox for incoming mail? Do you put outgoing mail into an official USPS blue mailbox or hand it directly to the carrier?
		Do you lock auxiliary buildings on your property when not in use?
		Privacy fences make it easy for a thief to gain entry unseen by neighbors. If you have one, have you taken other precautions such as an alarm system?
		Do you regularly do security maintenance around your home, i.e, make sure lights are working, cutting back tree limbs, etc.?

YES	NO	WINDOWS
		Are all windows equipped with auxiliary locks or pinned?
		Have you replaced or secured louvered windows?
		Are your window locks properly and securely mounted?
		Do you keep your windows locked when they are shut?
		Do you have good, secure locks on garage windows?
		Do you have garage windows covered with curtains or blinds?
		Are you as careful of basement and second floor windows as you are of those on the first floor?
		Are window air conditioners anchored and protected by steel grillwork to prevent removal from the outside?
		Can windows left open for ventilation be secured?
		Have screws been installed or rods inserted in the tracks of horizontal sliding glass windows?
		Have crank handles been removed from casement windows?

YES	NO	DOORS
		Do doors fit tightly within their door frames?
		Have you changed the locks or have had them re-keyed since the last owner? Construction job?
		Do all locks work smoothly?
		Does the deadbolt extend sufficiently into the strike plate/door jamb?
		Do you have an alarm system? Do you use it?
		Is the alarm system monitored? If so, does it ring directly to 9-1-1 instead of trying the homeowner first?
		Does the alarm system cover perimeter windows and doors as well as motion?
		Do you plan so that you do not need to "hide" a key under the doormat or similar place?
		Have you changed the locks or have had them re-keyed since the last owner? Construction job?
		Do you know everyone who has a key to your house so they are not in the possession of previous owners or previous friends?
		Are your exterior doors of solid core construction?
		Do entry doors have at least a 190-degree wide-angle peephole viewer?
		Do exterior doors have cylinder-type dead bolt locks with at least a 1" throw and beveled cylinder guard?
		Does the deadbolt extend sufficiently into the strike plate/door jamb?
		Are the door strike plates (the jamb fastening device that receives the bolt in the locking position) installed with screws that penetrate the door jamb at least 3 inches?
		Can all of your doors (basement, porch, French or balcony) be securely locked?
		Do your basement doors have locks that allow you to isolate that part of your house?
		Are all your locks, door frames and doors in good repair and able to withstand excessive force?
		If the hinge pins are on the outside, are they non-removable?
		Have screws been installed or security rods/bars been inserted in the tracks of sliding glass doors, especially if they do not have an auxiliary locking mechanism?

		Do all out-swinging doors have locking pins or non-removable hinges with pins?
		Do sliding doors have an auxiliary lock that locks both the door panels together? Or do you have a lock that locks the active side to the frame?
		Does the sliding glass door have a strong, working key lock?
		Can the overhead garage door be secured with a padlock, hasp or other auxiliary lock?
		Do you lock your garage doors whenever they are not in use?
		Does the overhead door have a track padlock?
		Do you lock your garage door leading into the house?
		Do you lock your car and take the keys out even when it is parked in your garage or driveway?
		If you have an animal door, can it be locked?
		Are you careful not to leave garage door openers in vehicles parked outside?
		Are all exterior accessible doors equipped with dead bolts?
		If there are glass panels in or near the doors are they reinforced in some way so that they cannot be shattered?

YES	NO	AWAY FROM HOME
		Do you lock all doors and windows when leaving the house, even for a short errand?
		Do you set alarm systems and security cameras?
		Do you leave on a TV/radio?
		Do you set interior lights on timers?
		Do you not put valuables in an obvious spot, such as jewelry in the master bedroom?
		Do you leave discreetly so a casual observer would not be able to tell you are leaving?
		Do you schedule a free vacation watch patrol request with San Mateo County Sheriff?
		Do you arrange for trusted neighbors or friends to pick up newspapers, mail packages and other deliveries?
		Do you notify a trusted neighbor to watch your residence?
		Did you leave your work or vacation addresses and telephone number with a trusted neighbor so you can be reached in case of an emergency?
		Do you arrange to keep your landscaping maintained?
		Do you use timing devices to turn your lamps, radios or televisions on and off?
		Do you tell whoever is watching your home about your timing devices?
		Do you leave some shades up or curtains open so the house doesn't look deserted, yet not creating too much visibility?
		Do you leave shades, blinds and lighting at "normal" (for your home) levels?
		Did you turn the telephone's bell and answering machine down low?
		If you have call forwarding, did you have your calls forwarded to a trusted friend or relative?
		Are you careful not to tell people your schedule if there is no need for them to know?
		Do you listen to your messages daily on your phone machine so the "beep" does not indicate you are gone, and mail box is full?
		Do you make sure you do not change your answering machine message to indicate you are away?
		Do you make sure to not give your vacation schedule or dates out via social media?

		Do you make sure that there is nothing different with the appearance of your home when you are gone that would indicate you are gone?
		Do you take the garage door opener, purse, wallet or anything with your name and address out of your vehicle?

YES	NO	AWAY FROM HOME / AND OTHER ISSUES
		Do you hide garbage cans or invite a neighbor to put trash in them so it looks like you are home, and place them and remove them from the street on collection day?
		Do you park a car half-way down your driveway so it looks like someone is home, and makes it harder for a thief to load up goods?
		Do you not utilize the “away from the office” feature on your email?
		Do you use a safety deposit box?
		Do you not keep keys easily accessible in your home to the casual guest/burglar?
		Do you not post images on social media while on vacation?
		Did you change your alarm code so it does not have the manufacturer’s or previous owner’s code as a viable option anymore?
		Do you retrieve your mail as soon as possible, and not leave outgoing mail to be picked up – especially with the flag raised?
		Do you make sure you remove flyers from your front door so it looks like you are home?
		Do you keep a list of all valuable property? And, do you keep this list in a safe place?
		Do you have a list of the serial numbers of your watches, cameras, computers and similar items?
		Have you engraved items of value, such as electronic equipment?
		Do you have a detailed description (or photos) of other valuables that do not have serial numbers?
		Do you avoid unnecessary display or publicity of your valuables?
		Do you keep excess cash and other valuables in a bank?

	Have you told your family what to do if they discover a burglar breaking in or already in the house?
	Have you told your family to leave the house undisturbed and call the sheriff or police if they discover a burglary has been committed?
	Do you have emergency telephone numbers listed by or on your phone?
	Do you have a security closet with a solid core door, pinned hinges and deadbolt lock?
	Do you know your neighbors?
	Do you belong to an official Neighborhood Watch Program?
	Do you give out personal information only when necessary?
	Do you shred personal information when no longer needed?
	Do you only open the door to people you know?
	Do you test your smoke and burglar alarms?
	Do you put away valuables, including bikes?
	Do you have a phone with numbers that light up?
	Do you have emergency supplies on hand for fire, earthquakes or power outages?
	Do you have a landline phone in your home?
	Do you have more than just a portable phone in your home?
	Are you not listed in the phone book?
	Do you not mention confidential issues in front of your children, where they might share sensitive information with someone who could use that information against you?
	Do you have a cell phone?
	If you have firearms, are they unloaded and locked safely away?
	If you have firearms do you keep this information confidential?
	Are your firearms registered?
	Are grills, lawn-mowers, and other valuables stored in a locked garage or shed, or if left out in the open, are hidden from view with a tarp and securely locked to a stationary point?

		Are your bikes always locked even if in a secured garage?
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YES	NO	CHILD SAFETY AT HOME
		Will you be home or will there be other responsible adult supervision for your children?
		Do you have smoke detectors on all the floors in your home, and do they work?
		If guns are on the premises, are they stored and locked safely? And ammunition locked separately?
		Are prescription drugs, alcohol, and other medicines or vitamins locked up?
		Are all cleaning supplies, chemicals, matches, and flammable liquids properly stored?
		Do you have a fire escape plan and have you practiced with family members?
		Will someone monitor the children's use of the Internet/and or telephone?
		Are 9-1-1 and other emergency numbers posted by the phone?
		Have you trained your children how to handle someone at the door?
		Have you trained your children to lock doors and windows?
		Do you show by example what you want your children to do? (Actions speak louder than words.)
		Do your children know what to do in an emergency?