



PREVENTING  
BURGLARY  
ON FRIPP  
A  
HOMEOWNERS  
GUIDE

## **INTRODUCTION**

What is a burglary? The legal definition is the unlawful entry of a structure to commit a felony or a theft. The use of force to gain entry need not have occurred. But the experience of a burglary feels more like a crime against you than against your property. Burglary can be a devastating experience. After all, strangers have violated your home and touched and taken your personal belongings.

Our goal is to help you take some simple steps so that it won't happen to you. Because Fripp is a gated island, it is less likely that you will experience a burglary BUT there is still a chance that it can occur. We will go through some measures for you to consider that can reduce the chance that your home will be chosen as an easy target.

Although home burglaries may seem random, they actually involve a selection process. Most burglars select their target because it offers them the easiest and best opportunity to carry out crime without being discovered. If you take steps to make your home unattractive to burglars, you will significantly reduce the likelihood that you will be a victim.

## **“CASE” YOUR HOME**

Walk around your property and look at it from a criminal's viewpoint. Does your property look like it would be easy to carry out a crime without being detected?

## **LIGHTING**

Lighting is your best friend and the burglar's enemy. Look around the dark areas of your yard. If your yard has dark areas that could conceal a burglar, motion activated lighting can easily be obtained and installed to provide extra yard lighting when and where you need it. Timer-operated accent lighting is another excellent way to add security and beauty to specific dark areas in your yard without sacrificing the authentic feel of a Fripp house and grounds.

Look at dark areas closer to the house, especially around burglary entry points – windows and doors. Remember to pay attention to the rear of the house. Are your windows and doors in deep shadow? Could they be illuminated better? Especially around doors, consider using timer-controlled or motion sensor floodlights. These can also add to the beauty of your home and make walking at night safer for you and your guests. While the occasional deer might set them off, so will someone who is approaching your home as a target.

The practice of leaving the garage or porch lights turned on all day is a dead giveaway that you are out of town. Timer-controlled or motion sensor floodlights offer illumination when it is needed without signaling you are out of town.

## **IS SOMEONE HOME?**

Thieves will almost always choose an unoccupied home over an occupied one. Your goal should be to make your home always look occupied.

Burglars generally target empty houses because that improves their chances of remaining undetected. Could a burglar tell if you are out of town? Your home should look occupied

when you are not there. Lights left on all the time and a dark home night-after-night tell burglars you are away. There are many things you can do to provide the illusion of “folks at home.” Connect table lamps or lights near the front and back windows to variable setting timers. Place these lamps so as to conceal the fact that no one is turning them on and off – behind closed curtains for example – and in a pattern that simulates occupancy. Use these lights all the time, not just when you’re away, so that “lights on a timer” does not signal the house is unoccupied.

You can also use timers to turn radios or televisions on and off to further enhance the illusion of occupancy. Timers are inexpensive and easy to set up.

If you are away from your home, take measures to assure that mail and newspapers will not pile up in your mailbox or in your driveway. Know your neighbors and ask them to pick up any deliveries or papers that might be left in your absence. When you are away, invite your neighbors to park a car or golf cart in your driveway. Unplug your garage door opener when you travel. If you are traveling for an extended period, make arrangements to have your lawn mowed and debris cleaned from your porches, steps and driveway.

### **DOORS AND WINDOWS**

Most burglars enter through the front, back, or garage doors. Experienced burglars know that the garage door is usually the weakest point of entry followed by the back door. The garage and back doors also provide the most concealment. Use high quality locks on all exterior doors. These resist twisting, prying, and lock-picking attempts. A quality deadbolt lock is a good addition.

But no matter how good the lockset, you have to use it. Lock all outside doors and windows before you leave the house or go to bed. Even if you’ll be gone for a short time, lock your doors. If yours is an older home, you may want to explore replacement doors. In addition to having improved security features, you will also benefit from energy saving features.

Sliding glass doors are very easy to open and burglars know this. Increase security by inserting a wooden dowel or stick into the door track to prevent the doors from opening. Other blocking devices available are metal fold-down blocking devices called "charley bars" and various track-blockers that can be screwed down.

The blocking devices described above solve half the equation. Older sliding glass doors can be lifted up and off their track and thereby defeat the latch mechanism. You can install anti-lift devices such as a pin that extends through both the sliding and fixed portion of the door. There are also numerous locking and blocking devices available that will prevent a sliding door from being lifted or forced horizontally.

Windows have latches, not locks, and therefore should have secondary blocking devices to prevent them from being opened from the outside. Inexpensive wooden dowels and sticks work well for horizontal sliding windows and through-the-frame pins work well for vertical sliding windows. Any of these should be easily removable from the inside if used in a bedroom.

If there are plantings close to your house where a burglar could hide, consider pruning them or replacing them with plants that have stickers, prickles, or thorns.

### **KEYS**

Do you know how many keys there are to your home and do you know who has them? If you cannot account for keys that may be floating about, consider having your locks re-keyed. This is a relatively simple process that can save you enormous headaches. And should you lose your keys, have your home re-keyed.

Experienced burglars know to look for hidden keys in planter boxes, under doormats, and above the door. They know all the fake rocks and gadgets sold by a variety of companies. Requiring a service vendor to see your neighbor to retrieve and return your house key will send the message that someone is watching. If you need to let someone into your home while you are away, purchase a lockbox for the key. These are inexpensive and can be reprogrammed with new access codes whenever necessary. The last word on locks and keys is Use Them.

### **SECURITY GATE CODES**

Your first line of security is the Fripp Gate. Protect your pin number just as you protect the keys to your home. Don't give it out and if you're not certain if others have your code, call the POA office and request a new code. It's no big deal and will save you some worry. Rental property should always have a separate rental pin number. The rental pin # should be used when you call in passes for tenants, and should they be expecting guests during their stay on Fripp you may want to share the rental pin # with them. Never Give Them Your Personal Pin. Rental pins are easily obtained or changed...just call the POA office.

### **ALARM SYSTEMS**

Monitored alarm systems definitely have a place in a home security plan and are effective, if used properly. Alarm systems deter burglaries. They increase the potential and fear of being caught. The deterrent value comes from the alarm company lawn sign and from the alarm decals on the windows. Like locks, to maximize the effectiveness, alarm systems should be activated when you leave your home.

### **RECORD & ENGRAVE VALUABLES**

What if a burglary happens? You can increase the likelihood of recovering stolen property if you can identify it. One way of making property identifiable is to engrave your drivers' license number or a personal code number (not your social security number) on televisions, stereos, computers, and small electronic appliances.

Operation Identification is a crime prevention program that promotes the use of an electric engraving pencil to engrave an identifying number on selected valuables for identification purposes in case the property is stolen. Participation in this program will facilitate the return of property that is recovered by law enforcement or has been found and turned into them.

Fripp Island Security has purchased an engraving pencil and it is available for property owners to check out at the Security Office. We will issue you a unique ID Number acceptable for entry into the National Crime Information Computer. A record of the number will be kept on file at our office.

Photograph your valuables in their locations around your home and make a list of the make, model, and serial numbers. This is important for proof when filing insurance claims. You should keep this list in a safety deposit box or with a relative or friend for safekeeping. Keep receipts for larger items in case you need to prove the value of the items for insurance purposes. Photocopy important documents and the contents of your wallet. You will be thankful that you took these steps in case your home is ever destroyed by fire or flood or if your wallet is lost or stolen.

#### **SUMMARY**

There are many other ways to communicate the message, “Nope, not this house!” For example, even a pair of shoes left next to the door or a large dog dish on the porch and a leash hooked to a railing might discourage criminals. You don’t need the dog...just the leash! There are devices that hang on a doorknob and sound like a barking dog warning if someone tries the door. These too can be useful even if you are at home. Use your imagination to make your home less of a target.

Again, we ask you to think like a burglar. "Case" your home the way a burglar would and look for easy ways to break in. Light your yard, make your home look occupied, lock your house and garage, and make it difficult to break in. We know that not all questions will be answered but we are available to offer any additional help you might need. As always, you may reach Fripp Security at 838-2334.

#### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

The Beaufort County Sheriff’s Office (BCSO) has extensive information on their web site. We have printed the materials and have them in a notebook which you may borrow from the Fripp Security Office.

In addition the BCSO offers Security Surveys. They will thoroughly inspect your home and then the Crime Prevention Officer will advise you of ways to better improve security and safety. To make arrangements for a survey, contact Staff Sergeant Mike Jennings at (843) 470-3287 or email [mjennings@bcgov.net](mailto:mjennings@bcgov.net) .