

# Home Security Checklist

By Nicole Nichols-West

- Interior - General
  - There is a smoke detector in hallways near bedrooms, near family room and kitchen, top of any stairway and garage.
  - Smoke detectors are tested once a month.
  - There are fire extinguishers in your kitchen, garage, and basement.
  - Members of your household know exactly what to do in case of emergency.
  - Valuable documents and possessions are stored in a fire-rated safe.
  - Guns are safely stored in a locked box, safe, or vault.
  - Guns are stored separately from the ammunition.
  - Every window in the house has a working key lock or is securely pinned.
- Interior - While You're Away
  - Several lights in your home are set up on automatic timers.
  - There is a working home alarm system.
  - The alarm is armed before you leave.
  - Mail and newspaper deliveries have been stopped.
  - A friend or neighbor has been asked to tend the yard and watch our home when away.
  - Your telephone answering machine doesn't announce: "We're not home right now?"
- Exterior
  - All doors are locked at night and every time you leave the house.
  - Exterior doors have a good-quality deadbolt lock.
  - All latch-strike plates on your exterior doors secured with at least 3" screws.
  - Glass panels in or near the doors are reinforced in some way so that they cannot be shattered.
  - Exterior doors without glass have a wide-angle door viewer installed for identifying visitors.
  - Doors are solid hardwood or metal-clad.
  - All doors are locked when you are home for the night or when you leave your residence.

- Exterior man-door and the door from the garage into your home have quality deadbolts.
- Overhead garage door is always closed, even when you are home.
- Front entrance and all other entrances are lit well enough to enable you to identify visitors at night.
- Motion sensors control exterior lighting.
- Spare keys are kept with a trusted neighbor, not under a doormat or planter, on a ledge, or in a mailbox.
- House number is clearly displayed so emergency vehicles can find the house quickly.
- Landscaping and Exterior Entries
  - Shrubs and bushes are trimmed so there is no place for someone to hide.
  - There are no dark areas around our house and garage.
  - Tree limbs been trimmed to prevent access to upper floor windows or balconies.
  - "Prickly" or thorny shrubbery are planted near windows to discourage loitering or hiding.
  - All outdoor foliage is trimmed to prevent obstruction of exterior lighting.
  - All gates are locked with a quality, weatherproof padlock.
  - All sheds or outbuildings are secured with a quality, weatherproof padlock.
  - All valuables stored outside are secured to a fixed, immovable object.