

Home Security Tips for Seniors

Although basic home security procedures are applicable to everyone, it's particularly important for seniors, who can often be seen as easy targets by criminals, to be especially vigilant in protecting themselves.

The following are some important rules all homeowners, but especially seniors, should follow to make sure they're better protected from property crimes.

- Keep all doors locked – with deadbolts – even when at home. Even people who make sure they always lock their doors when they're out can forget to lock the doors due to a false sense of security when they're comfortable at home.
- If possible, make sure your exterior doors *and door frames* are made of metal and avoid decorative, frosted or cut-glass windows. A heavy door won't do you much good if the frame around it can't withstand a physical assault, and even if they can't see you distinctly, criminals will know you're near the door if they can see movement inside. Windows can also be broken, allowing criminals to reach in and turn a deadbolt from the inside.
- Install lights with motion sensors on the exterior of the house. Not only will the lights come on and increase visibility when you're approaching the door, they'll also come on if anyone else approaches the house, alerting you to his or her presence in advance.
- Never hide a spare door key outside the house – under the mat or the flower pot, in a fake rock, on the shelf above the door frame. Criminals know how to spot a hiding place, and they're just as capable of browsing catalogs that sell key-hiding rocks as you are. If you're worried about losing a key and being unable to get in, give your spare key to a trusted neighbor, friend, or family member.
- Never unlock and open the door until you know who is on the other side. Installing a peephole or an intercom system can help you identify a visitor before allowing him or her access to your home.
- When answering the door, carry a wireless phone with you in case you need to make a quick 911 call.

While anyone can theoretically be a victim of a property crime, seniors can often be seen as particularly vulnerable and are encouraged to take extra precautions with their safety. Following these tips can help increase seniors' security, as well as their ability to relax and view their homes as sanctuaries.

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