



AUBURN POLICE DEPARTMENT CRIME PREVENTION

City of Auburn
Auburn, Washington

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Do-It-Yourself Crime Prevention

Did you know? ...Your home is 67% more likely to be burglarized between the hours of 8am-6pm, with an 80% likelihood of no one being home during the burglary. You are twice as likely to fall victim to burglary during the week and, in 88% of cases, no alarm was activated.



When we fall victim to burglary, we lose more than our possessions; we lose our sense of security, the freedom to feel safe walking city streets after dark, going to a park alone, and letting our children walk home from school. We might even lose the ability to feel safe in our own homes. The Police, no matter how effective, can't be everywhere at once.

We can't always get back what crime takes away, but we can take back our freedom to feel safe. This "Do It Yourself" handbook gives us the tools we need to ensure greater security for ourselves and our families. Do your part, and go over the recommendations for burglary prevention, personal safety, and child safety.

You can also help prevent crime in other ways. Starting with your own kids, teach them about personal safety, and encourage them to develop skills that will help them lead productive lives. Help support local schools with programs that contribute to personal growth, and stay involved in local activities that promote the health of the community.

You can also get involved in your own neighborhood by establishing and sustaining a Block Watch Program. Be a champion for your neighborhood, and share these tips with your neighbors to strengthen your community.

By working together, we can empower ourselves to make our streets safe for everyone.

HOME SECURITY

Burglary is a crime that threatens all homes, but especially those which provide criminals with the “opportunity” to intrude, steal and escape undetected. There are three primary strategies you can employ to minimize the burglar’s opportunity:

1. Physical Security	2. Alarms	3. Block Watch programs
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Physical Security

Sliding Doors and Windows:

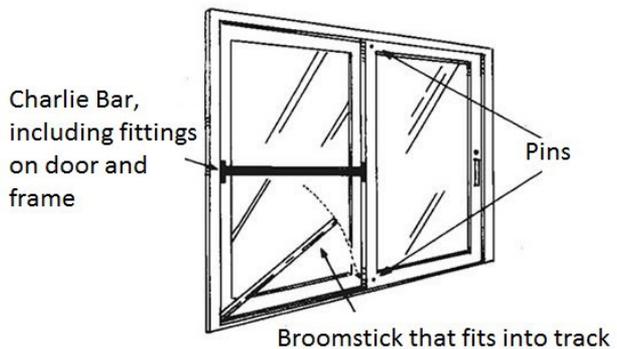
Exterior sliding doors and windows have a number of security problems in common, primarily due to their flimsy locks.

1. If the door or window slides on an inside track, consider using a metal rod or wooden dowel to fit snugly along the bottom track to prevent the door/window from being forced open.

2. A “Charlie Bar” (see diagram) is a more permanent and visible means of preventing lateral movement. Some models are designed to fit an outside sliding door panel.

3. Some doors and windows can be secured with a pin. Inspect your door or window in the fully-closed position. If the frame permits drilling, drill a hole through the outside frame and halfway through the sliding one. Slide into place a pin or sturdy nail that fits the hole snugly to prevent the door or window from being forced up or back. Be careful when drilling through the frame that you don’t damage the thermal seal or the glass. Fire safety requires that pin locks be installed at the bottom of a window, not at the top. This is to avoid super-heated air near the ceiling of a home engulfed in flames.

Secure Sliding Glass Door

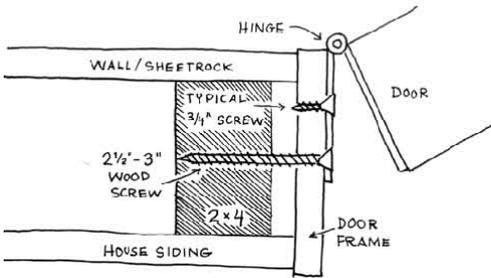


Exterior Doors:

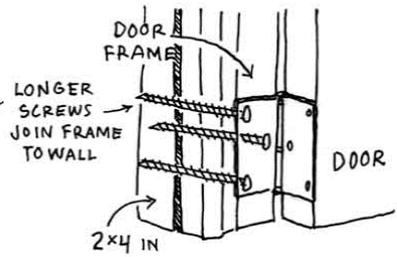
Solid-core wooden doors with rugged frames are best because they cannot be spread apart with a pry bar. Using a single-cylinder deadbolt with a one-inch throw, in addition to the keyed knob lock, will provide the best method of security for exterior doors.

Reinforce the hinges, frame, and doorstop strip with 3" to 4" wood screws. The door frame is strengthened when the screws go into the 2 x 4 wall stud. Without this reinforcement, pry bars can push the door and frame apart or break the frame altogether.

1. OVERHEAD VIEW



2. 3-D VIEW



Door Viewers (peephole):

Consider installing a peephole to help identify who is at your door, and avoid opening the door to strangers. The best peepholes are wide-angle viewers (200 degrees) so you have a view of what is in front of the door and/or on both sides.

Windows:

Windows should have auxiliary locking devices. Keep your windows closed and locked when you are away, even when on the second story. Screens and storm windows should be securely fastened.

Exterior Lights:

Lighting is considered one of the best deterrents to burglary. Motion-activated LED floodlights are very effective in illuminating a wider and deeper range area than most common outdoor lights. They are excellent for enclosed backyards, sidewalks or driveways because they detect motion, and can alert you when activated. Consider altering the sensitivity of the light to avoid tripping the sensor with vegetation during windy conditions.

Interior Lighting:

When you leave your home, keep some interior lights on to give the appearance that someone is home. Similarly, a radio or television that creates noise inside the home adds to the illusion that the home is occupied.

Garages:

Garage doors should be kept closed and locked at all times when not in use. Valuable items such as tools, bicycles, and lawn equipment are commonly stored in the garage and are easy to steal when left unattended. Keep your valuables safe by closing and locking your garage, and always maintaining a visual when working in your yard.

The door between your home and garage should be a solid-core wooden or metal door with a locking deadbolt. Most doors contain less than satisfactory locking devices, and upgrading to a high-quality deadbolt could prevent entry from the garage to your home.

Automatic, garage door openers are a quick and convenient way to enter and exit your garage. However, some devices are less secure and can be opened by stray signals. Pairing your automatic, garage door opener with your alarm could be beneficial to alert you when the door was opened, but checking to make sure you are purchasing a reputable system to ward off unwanted signals is best.

Ladders:

Ladders should be kept in a garage or secure structure to prevent access to them. Burglars use these devices to gain entry into windows that can only be reached with the assistance of a ladder. Keeping these in a secure location will help prevent entry via roof or window point.

Landscaping:

Adding shrubs and trees to your home provides you with a better appearance, and communicates to people that you are attentive to your home and care about your property. While landscaping makes your property more attractive, it can also act as a way for a person to conceal themselves on your property. Pay attention to the placement of your shrubs and trees, and always follow the 3/7 rule: shrubs are no taller than 3 feet, and trees are limbed to seven feet. Doors, windows, and walkways should be clearly visible from the street. This will help to increase the visibility of your property by neighbors and passerby's, and minimize concealment of suspects on your property.

Alarms

Alarms act as an additional layer of security and protection to your home, and can alert you when movement in the home is detected, or a window/door is opened while you are away. Alarm signs posted at the home act as a deterrent and communicate to passerby that an alarm is installed at the home.

When selecting an alarm system, shop around for a reputable company that will provide you with the level of security you are seeking. Further, make sure that the sensors for motion, doors, and windows are not too sensitive and cause the alarm to falsely activate. The City of Auburn has a False Alarm Reduction Program and an Alarm Permit requirement for anyone installing an alarm (to be completed by the alarm company). Police respond to thousands of false alarms per year, which causes a burden to Police resources that could be better used to respond to real emergencies. While all valid alarms will be free, fees will be billed to you for any false alarm activation that resulted in a Police response. Please familiarize yourself with the City of Auburn's alarm ordinance and registration requirements here: www.crywolfservices.com/auburnwa/

Block Watch

You and your neighbors can help deter crime within your community and make it a safer place to live by banding together to look out for one another. Lifestyle differences sometimes make it difficult to be neighborly and engage in crime prevention, but following some of the steps outlined below can help.



What is Block Watch?

Block Watch is a program designed to engage you and your neighbors to help watch each other's property at times when you are home and they are away. It is important that you introduce yourself to your neighbors to establish a relationship so that you are able to decipher between routine behaviors/vehicles/occurrences and those that are suspicious and abnormal. While the Police are a valuable asset and help deter crime, an Officer would not be able to recognize a stranger in your neighborhood like you would. Recognizing suspicious vehicles/people in your neighborhood, notifying your neighbors of suspicious activities, and partnering with the Police is what a Block Watch is all about.

How Does it Work?

The success of your Block Watch is in the hands of you and your neighbors. The more engaged your neighbors are with each other, the level of communication between them, and the willingness to participate will lead to the success and safety of your neighborhood and Block Watch Program. You will be asked to be a good witness and call 911 to report suspicious people and vehicles so the Police can contact those people. It is never advised for you to make contact with suspicious people, and potentially place yourself in a situation you are not able to handle.

How to Develop a Block Watch in your Neighborhood:

Contact your neighbors and assess their level of interest and involvement in the Block Watch Program. Establish leaders or "Block Watch Captains" that will be the main point of contact for your Block Watch Program, and the person(s) responsible for sending out information about crime trends and other information to the neighbors. Once your Block Watch Captains have been assigned, send them to one of the Auburn Police Department's Quarterly Block Watch Presentations. To find out dates for upcoming Presentations, please visit the following website:

www.auburnwa.gov/services/police/police_programs/crime_prevention.htm

Take the information learned in the meeting back to your neighborhood and meet with your neighbors to discuss what you learned, and listen to how they would like to contribute and be involved in the Block Watch Program. Once you have identified your neighborhood participants, complete the following:

1. Create a roster with participant's names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses.
2. Plot the participating neighbors on a map (hand-drawn, Google map printout).
3. Submit the roster and map to the City of Auburn's Neighborhood Programs Coordinator at 25 West Main Street (253-876-1988).

The Neighborhood Programs Coordinator will take this information and work with the Traffic Engineering Department to determine the placement of the Block Watch Signs to ensure that all participants are encompassed by the signs. Once the location for the signs has been approved, Block Watch signs will be ordered by the City and placed in your neighborhood. This usually takes between 2-6 weeks. To be considered an "Official Block Watch", two meetings must be held with your Block Watch. Attendance at the APD Block Watch Presentation will count toward one of your meetings. We highly suggest signing up for National Night Out (NNO) as your second meeting.

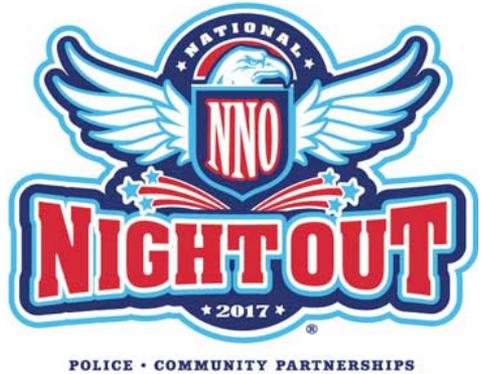
Now what?

Make your Block Watch fun! Successful Block Watches engage with each other and the community. People tend to have less time to spend with their neighbors, so organize events that are less time consuming, and something everyone can enjoy. For example, one neighborhood organized a Christmas Train where vehicles decorated with Christmas lights slowly drove through the neighborhood. Participants collected food and money to be donated to the local Food Bank. This event took a mere 2 hours, but the sense of community and neighborhood engagement was miraculous! Organize other gatherings and help give back to the community in which you live.

Do some research and use an app where your neighborhood can join and notify each other of suspicious activities in the neighborhood, neighborhood activities, and even garage sales or the need for a cup of sugar when you're baking. You would be surprised at the basic needs of your neighbors, and how much you can really help. Connecting with one another on a basic level and looking out for one another will lead to your success as a Block Watch.

National Night Out

National Night Out (NNO) is an event designed to raise awareness for crime and drug prevention, and generate support for local anticrime programs that increase neighborhood togetherness and police/community partnerships. NNO has proven to be an effective and inexpensive program that many residents find beneficial because of the neighborhood engagement and the nationwide participation.



To organize your neighborhood event for NNO, contact your neighbors and decide on an event that suits your neighborhood needs. Events can be as large as block parties, or as small as ice cream socials with your immediate neighbors. Some additional ideas for events are:

- Block parties
- BBQ's
- Cookouts
- Potlucks
- Sporting events (a neighborhood baseball or kickball game, for example)
- Ice cream or Lemonade Social

National Night Out is always held on the first Tuesday in August and registration is required. Please refer to the following website for details and registration information: www.auburnwa.gov/NNO

How to Report a Crime:

Police rely on your reports help to combat crime. When you see something suspicious or witness a crime, do not hesitate to call the Police. Thieves and burglars thrive in neighborhoods that lack engagement and visible presence. To communicate to a potential criminal that people are present in the neighborhood and engaged with crime prevention, try employing one of the following options:

1. CALL 911 or the non-emergency number at 253-288-2121. If the Police arrive, the person(s) will know that someone was watching them and reported the incident to the Police. This will make it less likely for the person to return because they know the neighborhood is engaged, and willing to call the Police to report suspicious activities.
 - a. 911 – For all in-progress events
 - b. 253-288-2121 – For all past and non-emergent events
2. Open your curtains or a window to show that someone is present in your home.
3. Call your neighbor and meet outside to chat to show that multiple neighbors are home, and that the person is clearly visible by more than one person. This will increase the number of witnesses should the person be attempting to commit a crime.
4. Take out your garbage or do yard work. This is a non-threatening and normal task for any homeowner to engage in, but it also allows you to go outside and see what is happening outside. Suspects are less likely to commit crimes if they fear they are being watched, or fear that someone will call the Police.
5. If you have a neighborhood app, report the incident so all neighbors are aware. Nothing is more intimidating than a door-to-door salesperson that is greeted by a homeowner, who already knows the salesperson's name, and what they are selling. Let the person know that all the neighbors are aware that they are in the neighborhood, and who they are so that they are less likely to return. On a side note—a City of Auburn Business License is required for door-to-door sales.

What else can you do?

Exchange work and vacation schedules with neighbors you trust so you can keep an eye on each other's homes. If you know that your neighbor is not home and you see an obvious invitation for a burglar, correct the issue. For example, close any opened garage door, remove the accumulation of newspapers from the lawn or front porch, and secure any property left unattended outside.

What are Some Suspicious Activities?

- A person screaming
- The sound of glass breaking
- Someone removing valuables from a home or vehicle
- Unfamiliar vehicles in your neighbor's driveway, or on the street
- Unfamiliar persons loitering in the area
- Unfamiliar persons going door-to-door asking for a person with a name that does not live with you, or saying they are looking for their pet
- Someone looking into windows of a home
- A sales person with an odd sales pitch:
 - Does the person have attire matching the business they claim to work for?
 - Does the person have ID or a business card?
 - Does the person have a City of Auburn Business License that allows them to sell door-to-door?

If you hear or see something suspicious:

- Call the Police
- Take a photo or video with your phone from a safe distance
- Report the incident and description on a neighborhood app so others are aware
- Write down details of the person(s):
Sex (male/female), age, race, height/weight, hair/eye color, etc.
- Write down details of the vehicle(s):
License plate number and issuing state, color, make/model, unique features (body damage, stickers, etc.)

Burglary Prevention List

Outside Perimeter:

YES	NO	
Y	N	Do you lock your garage?
Y	N	Do you lock your doors when away from home for short periods?
Y	N	Do you lock doors that are out of view when working in the yard?
Y	N	Do you avoid leaving keys in plain view?
Y	N	Are your windows fitted with locks, and do you lock them?
Y	N	Are sliding doors fitted with a wooden dowel or Charlie Bar?
Y	N	Do you keep tools, ladders, etc. secured?
Y	N	Do you light the exterior of your home during the hours of darkness?
Y	N	Do you change your locks immediately if your keys are lost or stolen?

Inside Security:

YES	NO	
Y	N	Do you lock and/or hide your valuables?
Y	N	Do you leave lights on when away from the home?
Y	N	Do you secure private documents?
Y	N	Do you have an alarm system that you routinely activate?

Vacation Security:

YES	NO	
Y	N	Do you notify a neighbor of your travel plans?
Y	N	Do you leave window shades in the normal position?
Y	N	Do you cancel all deliveries and mail?
Y	N	Do you leave a car in the driveway?
Y	N	Do you leave interior lights on a timer?
Y	N	Do you double-check that windows and doors are locked?

If you answered "no" to any of the above questions, you may want to improve your home security by using some of the suggestions in the questions asked. Review your property on a regular basis to ensure that you are following simple rules such as locking doors and windows, even in the summertime.

PERSONAL SAFETY

Maintaining awareness of your surroundings at all times can help reduce the likelihood of falling victim to a crime. The best ways to protect yourself are to maintain awareness, and incorporate certain habits to your daily routine. Always remember to trust your instincts, and remove yourself from any location or situation where you do not feel comfortable.

Below, you will find a list of suggestions on things you can do to keep yourself safe.

- Walk with a purpose and look around at others in the area.
- As you walk to your car or house, have your keys ready in your hand to minimize your delay entering.
- Avoid going to remote or dark areas alone.
- If you are being followed, go to the nearest populated area like a store or a park.
- Keep doors and windows locked at all times, even when you are home.
- Be wary of strangers that approach you and ask you for help, or ask you make a call for them. This is a common tactic used by thieves to distract you and steal your belongings.
- Make eye contact with people that approach you.
- Remember your personal weapons: voice, teeth, fingernails, feet, hands, and head.
 - Know how to use them: yell, bite, pinch, stomp, kick, poke and dig into skin.
 - Know your personal items that can be used as weapons: keys, bag, purse, and pens.
 - Know where to use them: eyes, shins, feet, ears, hair, tender skin, and nose.
- Never enter a home that may have been burglarized. From a safe location, call 911 to have the Police enter and clear the home for you. Never assume that the suspect(s) are gone.
- Never provide personal information over the phone or on the internet.
- Keep personal items such as bags, purses, and phones with you at all times.

Child Safety

Talk with your children about their safety, establish rules and guidelines for them to follow, and teach them personal information in the case of an emergency. The list below will help guide you on things to keep your children educated and safe.

- Talk with your children and make sure they memorize the following:
 1. Their first and last name
 2. Your first and last name
 3. Your 10-digit phone number (bonus if they know at least 2)
 4. Their address
- Place a list of emergency names and phone numbers in a safe place, and teach your children how and when to use them.
- Teach your children about 911 and when to call it. Let them know that they will never be in trouble if they are calling for help.
- Instruct them not to answer the door when no one is home, or tell them to yell for their parent to make it appear that someone is home. They should never open the door if adults are not present in the home and aware that they are opening the door.
- Teach your children the difference between a stranger (a person unknown to them) and a safe stranger (such as a teacher, employee, or a police officer).
- Remind them not to do or go anywhere without asking you first.
- Teach them about the buddy system and the importance of safety in numbers.

PERSONAL PROPERTY PROTECTION

It is important to be aware of your surroundings, even when it comes to your personal property at your house. While personal property is usually insured against theft, identity theft continues to be on the rise and can take a long time to recover from.

Auto-Theft Prevention

Auto theft is a widespread crime that affects the whole community, and leads to higher insurance rates and property damage. The motive for this crime is primarily joyriding, transportation, and profit from selling the vehicle or vehicle parts (vehicle stripping). Knowing the motivation for auto theft and how cars are stolen will help reduce your risk of falling victim to this crime.

- Believe it or not, many vehicles are stolen from driveways where the keys were left in the ignition and the doors were unlocked. No matter how long you are away from your car, always lock the doors and take the keys with you.
- Do not leave anything inside the vehicle with your name and address on it. Thieves can use this information, drive to your residence, and burglarize your house while you are away.
- If you have GPS installed in the vehicle, make sure to use an address near yours (a store address, for example) so that if the vehicle is stolen, the GPS will not direct the thief to your house.
- Consider a GPS tracker for your vehicle to make it easy for the Police to recover your vehicle in the event that it is stolen.

Identity Theft

Identity theft is one of the most common and fastest-growing crimes in America. Washington ranks number 15 in the United States for identity theft/fraud victimization. The following is a list of suggestions to minimize your chances of being a victim of identity theft:

1. Never give out your social security number, mother's maiden name, or account numbers to anyone.
2. Never provide bank account or other information over the phone.
3. Promptly remove mail from your mailbox to limit exposure of sensitive mail items that may contain banking information.
4. Do not click on links in emails, even if you think the email is from a credible source.
5. Shred expired credit/debit cards, receipts, and all banking materials.

CITY OF AUBURN RESOURCES

Auburn Police Department..... 253-931-3080

340 E Main St #201 | Auburn, WA 98002

Emergency – Police/Fire/Medical 9-1-1

Non-Emergency Number 253-288-2121

Online Reportswww.auburnwa.gov/services/citizen_reporting.htm

City Clerk’s Office253-931-3039

City Hall.....253-931-3000

King County District Court206-205-9200

Maintenance and Operations.....253-931-3048

Mayor’s Office253-931-3041

Neighborhood Programs253-876-1988

Parks, Arts & Recreation253-931-3043

Permit Center253-931-3020

Planning and Development253-931-3090

Public Works (Engineering)253-931-3010

