

CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG
POLICE DEPARTMENT

Home Security Recommendations

Landscaping

Overgrown landscaping (bushes, trees, shrubs) situated in front of windows and around doors can provide easy concealment when burglarizing a home. It is recommended that bushes and shrubs be kept cut down to 3 ft off the ground, and that trees be trimmed up 6 ft off the ground. Maintained landscaping also shows pride in ownership and gives the house that "lived in look".

Lighting

All entrances (front, side, rear) should have lighting with enough wattage to light up the entire entry area (porch, steps, decks). The lighting should also be bright enough for facial recognition during the evening and night hours. Adding flood lights to all sides of your home help in lighting the perimeter areas of the house and yard, and should operate on timers or motion sensors.

Fencing

Having a fence, whether it is around the entire yard or just the back yard, shows ownership and defines property lines. It is important to keep the fence in good repair and try to keep the gate locked when not in use. This also benefits when you have a dog, which is always an added security advantage. Privacy fencing, although nice, definitely serves its purpose for giving homeowners privacy from their neighbors and other surroundings. It also is beneficial to a burglar and gives them that extra advantage of concealment.

Sheds, Outdoor closets, Garages

Always keep any outdoor buildings (including attached and detached garages) secure with a strong hasp and padlock. Any property kept inside these structures should be inventoried with make, model and serial #s documented. Try chaining together lawn equipment with a chain or cable and secure them with a padlock. This will make it difficult for the burglar to remove any one item if they are chained together. Ladders should be kept in a secured place, and not stored on the outside area of a home.

Alarms

It is always beneficial to have an alarm system for your home. These systems can be suited to fit your personal and family needs, and can also provide coverage to outdoor buildings and garages. There are several reputable alarm companies in the Charlotte area, so we recommend getting quotes from two or three companies before making a decision. Make sure that an alarm horn is installed on the outside of the home, so as to notify your neighbors and possibly a passing CMPD Officer when the alarm is sounding. Your alarm must also be registered with CMPD to avoid being fined in the event of false alarms. Go to www.cmpd.org, click on A to Z Services, then click on Alarm Ordinance and Registration or call 704-432-0431.

Exterior Doors and Deadbolts

All exterior doors should be solid steel or solid wood. Hollow core doors, if used, should be for interior doors only. Any deadbolts that are situated within 40 inches of a window should be double cylinder (deadbolt that takes a key on both sides). Deadbolt throws should also be a minimum of 1 inch and strike plates should be secured with 3 inch screws or longer.

Windows and Sliding Glass Doors

All ground floor and top floor windows should be kept closed and locked when not in use. Newer model windows now come with ventilation latches, which is an extra security feature designed to allow the window to be opened a few inches without having the ability to raise it any higher. Window bolts can also be installed for extra security. Window bolts secure the top and bottom window frames together and can be found at local hardware stores. Sliding glass doors should be secured with a locking bar designed specifically for these types of doors or by putting a broom stick or other obstacle in the track. Sliding glass doors can also be lifted out of the frame. To avoid this, insert a few screws (spaced about ten inches apart) into the track allowing just enough clearance for the door to slide open, but don't put the screws flush into the track. If someone attempts to lift the door out of the frame, it will lift into the screws, thus not allowing it to happen.

Property Inventory / Light Timers / Engraving

As mentioned above, all applicable property should be listed on an inventory sheet with make, model and serial #s documented. This along with photos of expensive valuables (jewelry, silverware etc) should be kept in a safe place and readily accessible (safety deposit box, fire safe). It is a good idea to engrave your driver license # on the back of electronic items. This will assist in property identification and seizure should it be recovered from criminals or from pawn shops. Interior lights should be set on timers to come on during different times during the day and evening hours. This shows that someone may be home even when the house is unoccupied.