

Crime Prevention Tips Preventing Home Burglaries at Apartment Residences

Residential burglaries literally hit close to home. There is almost nothing more personal than having one's home, and one's privacy, invaded by an unwelcome outsider. Apartment residences differ from single family residences in that multiple residences are housed in common buildings, with residents sharing courtyards, public spaces, and parking lots.

Many of the crime fighting tips utilized by single family residence dwellers also work in apartment residences. However, there are crime fighting tips that are unique to apartment residences, and these will be covered here. Some of the tips also are applicable in single family homes.

Steps Apartment Management Can Take:

- Ensure that employees of the apartment community are easily identified. This is especially important with maintenance staff. Often, burglars, using tools to enter apartment residences, are mistaken for maintenance staff by residents and visitors. Having maintenance staff wear uniforms and carry a picture ID posted on their outer clothing helps residents, visitors and police identify bona fide maintenance staff employees.
- Review, on a regular basis, security systems. This can include cameras, lighting, locks on common area entrances, and other security equipment. Make sure cameras are in working order, and that there are enough cameras to cover all common areas. Check for blind spots in camera views. Make sure gates leading to common areas from the outside are locked. Common now are card key locks, utilizing a card (much like a credit card) that are issued to residents and staff for access through locked gates.
- Help residents by reminding them of security tips. Remind them to lock their doors and windows, and encourage them to report suspicious activity.
- Form crime watch groups and encourage residents to attend. Crime watch groups allow residents, management, and police to share information and work together to combat crime.

Steps Apartment Residents Can Take:

- Lock your doors and windows. This includes patio doors and windows on upper floors. Burglaries have occurred where entry was made on 2nd or 3rd floor unlocked patio doors and windows.
- Make your home look and feel “lived in”. When away, leave a radio on at a conversational level. When away for several days, use timers for lights. Make friends with your neighbors, and have them remove door hangers and package notification notes from your door. Stop newspaper delivery when away for an extended period of time. Have a neighbor accept packages for you when you’re away. Give your neighbor your emergency contact information in case you’re home is burglarized. Ask them to keep an eye on your apartment.
- When away for an extended period of time, consider removing property, especially jewelry, from your residence and storing in a safe deposit box or in another secure location. If jewelry is extremely valuable or used infrequently, consider permanently storing in a safe deposit box.
- Record serial numbers of (or engrave your drivers license number on) your property. Keep these records in a safe place (IE safe deposit box) and provide to police in the event of a burglary.
- Consider renter’s insurance to cover the value of your property should your home be burglarized.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Get to know your neighbors, and get to know your apartment staff. If you see someone “working” on an apartment you don’t recognize as staff, check with the apartment office, or call 911. If, for example, you observe someone “working” on an apartment door and it’s after normal business hours, contact apartment management or 911.
- If you observe strangers “milling around” the apartment community aimlessly, or “trying” doorknobs, or looking through windows of apartments and/or vehicles, call 911. Often burglars will carry empty backpacks or knapsacks to carry stolen property away in. Trust your intuition; if it doesn’t look right, it probably isn’t right.
- Notify the apartment management office when you’re going to be away for an extended period of time (a few days or longer). Ask them to check the exterior of your apartment home frequently for signs of entry. Give them a way to contact you in the event of an emergency.

Remember that YOU are an important partner in the fight against crime.