

# Block Watch Safety Reminders provided by the King Co. Sheriff's Department

## Home Security

You and your home will not be safe unless you follow good security practices and make your home difficult for a burglar to enter.

Research shows that if it takes more than four or five minutes to break into a home, most burglars will go elsewhere. Many insurance companies provide discounts for devices that make a home safer (e.g., deadbolt locks, window grates, and alarms), so be sure to check with your representative.



### Secure Your Home

- Establish a routine to make certain that doors and windows are locked and alarm systems are turned on.
- Never give information to unidentified telephone callers and announcing your personal plans in want ads or public notices (such as giving your address when advertising items for sale).
- Keep all doors and windows locked, even if you are just going out "for a minute."
- If a window is left open a few inches for ventilation, it should be locked to prevent someone from opening it more.
- Lock gates, garages, and sheds after each use.
- Store bicycles, mowers, etc. in a locked garage or shed, or secure them to some stationary point.
- Keep your sports equipment inside the house when it's not in use.
- Don't leave your garage door opener where it is easily accessible. Keep your vehicle registration, proof of insurance, and any other papers with your home address on them where a criminal is not likely to find them.
- Remember that pet doors, crawl spaces, ventilation windows, and other openings should be secured. Also make sure that window air conditioners are installed securely and cannot easily be removed from the outside.

### Protect Your Keys

- Don't carry house keys on a key ring bearing your home address or leave house keys with your car in a commercial parking lot or with an attendant.
- Don't hide your keys in "secret" places outside your home—burglars usually know where to look.
- Don't leave your home keys on a chain with your vehicle keys when you use valet parking.
- Don't give maids, babysitters, valets, or others working in your home access to your home keys.

### Know Who is at Your Door

- Learn to recognize who belongs in your neighborhood, development, or apartment, i.e., residents, workers, guests, etc.
- Know who's at your door before opening it. Check photo registration card before dealing with any solicitors, peddlers, interviewers, etc. Be suspicious of persons making unsolicited offers of services.
- Post a NO SOLICITING sign if you don't want any solicitor to ring your door bell, knock on your door, or make any other sound to attract your attention.
- Never let a stranger enter your home to use the telephone. Offer to make the call yourself in an emergency.

### **Be Careful with Information**

- Don't leave notes on your door when you are away from home.
- Don't give your name or whereabouts on your answering machine message. Never say you aren't home.
- Don't discuss your finances or possessions with strangers.
- Keep valuable papers, jewelry, etc. in a bank safe deposit box. Don't store them at home unless you have a security closet or a safe that is well hidden and cannot be removed.

### **When in Doubt, Play it Safe**

- Call the police at 9-1-1 if you are at home and hear or see something suspicious. Don't take direct action yourself. An officer will be dispatched to your address even if you cannot speak or hang up.
- Don't go in or call out if you return home and suspect someone has broken into your home (e.g., if a window or screen is broken, a door is ajar, or a strange vehicle is parked in the driveway). Go to a neighbor's home and call the police.

### **Identify Your Property**

- Etch your driver's license number on any valuables that might be stolen.
- Photograph valuables that cannot be etched.
- Keep a detailed, up-to-date record of your valuables. Include type, model, serial number, and fair market value.