

# Safety

# HOME SECURITY

## Why This Is Important

“Due to stresses placed upon the health care system and other critical functions, civil disturbances and breakdowns in public order may occur.” Department of Homeland Security in National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza

This is a broad topic. If people get frightened or hungry, or if there are criminals in the area, they might want to come into homes and see if the people in there have valuables or food. What actually will happen is unknown. Your personal preparation, home security measures and the community you live in all affect the outcome. Most of the security measures following are easily done at minimal cost.

The most effective approach is protection in depth. We'll start from the outside and work in, but these three areas can be done at the same time.

## Work With Your Neighbors



A cooperative neighborhood can increase everyone's collective home security with very little individual effort or time. Get to know your neighbors and their habits. This will help you recognize unusual things going on.

- **There is strength and safety in numbers.** If you've laid the groundwork for neighborhood cooperation, you can later organize neighborhood patrols to the benefit and security of all.
- **There is strength and security in prior preparation.** The more prepared your neighbors are for extended emergencies in general and a pandemic in particular, the better off your community will be. However, you need to strike a balance between being discreet about your own preparations (keeping a low profile) and trying to alert your neighbors. This is a personal decision. How you handle it depends on you - and your neighbors.



Be secure, but don't stand out from your neighbors!

## Harden Your Home

The University of Oklahoma Police Department has an excellent notebook, "Hardening Your Home for Homeowners," at <http://www.ou.edu/oupd/hown.htm>. Some of the following are discussed in this notebook.

**NOTE:** If you are renting your home, consult with your landlord about security concerns.

**1. Outside the home.** You will want to consider the perimeter of your property as well as the home itself. Consider the following:



Thorns discourage intruders

- Plant vegetation that discourages intruders. This could be thorny blackberries or wild rose bushes, for example.

- Remove or trim vegetation that affords a hiding place for intruders. Walk around your home both in daylight and low light conditions and become aware of hiding spots or blind spots created by trees, bushes, hedges, sheds, vehicles, etc.



Remove Hiding Spots

- Install a security fence and post "no trespassing" signs.

**2. Inside the home.** There are many things you can do to increase the overall security of your home and make it more difficult for intruders to gain access.

**Consider these ideas:**



Quality Locks

- Install strong, quality locks on all doors and windows.



Strong Doors

- Make sure doors, windows, garage, and any other outdoor openings are made of strong materials.
- Install a wide-angle peephole on exterior doors.



Peep Holes

- If you enjoy pets, consider a dog, but only if you will prepare for the dog as well as yourself.



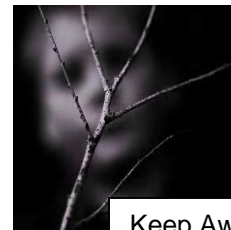
Consider a Guard Dog

## Develop a Security Mindset



**1.** You not only have the right to protect yourself and your family, you have an obligation and a responsibility to do so. This is true now. This may be critical in a pandemic environment. With up to 40 percent of their staff sick, law enforcement agencies will likely have to reduce their services. There might not be enough police to respond, even to life threatening emergencies. Families might be on their own for their own protection.

**2.** Pay attention to your surroundings. Be conscious of people, vehicles and events around you, your home, and your family.



Keep Aware



**3.** Do not draw attention to yourself. Keep a low profile, and avoid trouble.

**4.** Consider putting up a 'beware of dog' sign, even if you don't have one. Also, put a dog dish outside.