



RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY PREVENTION **TIPS & STRATEGIES**



cityoftacoma.org/burglaryprevention

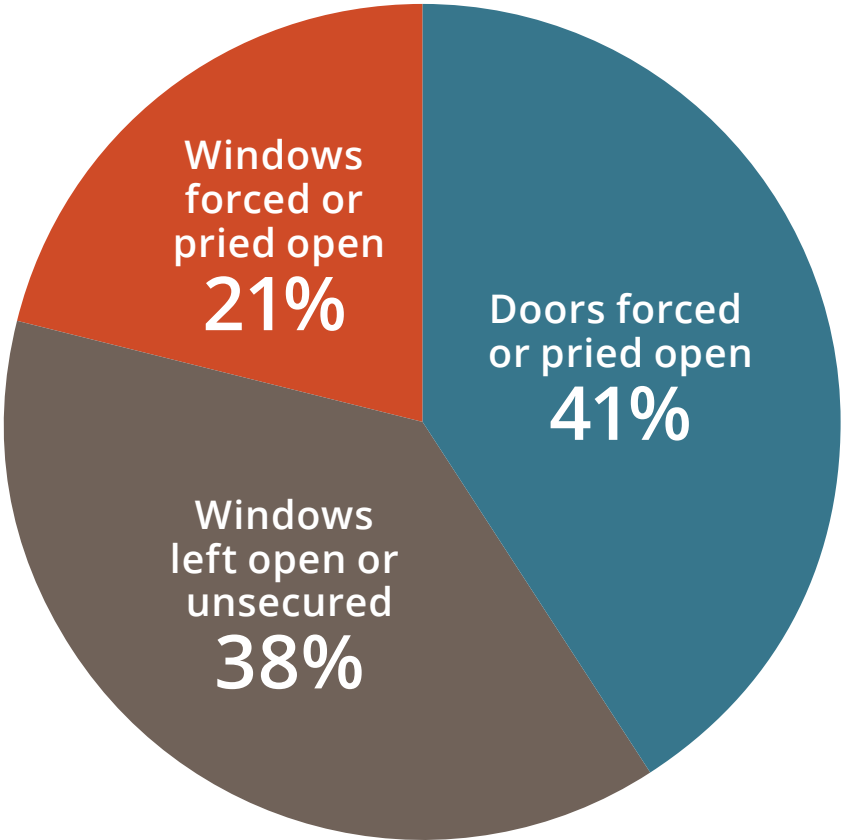
There are more than **5 million residential burglaries each year** in the United States, and most of them could have been prevented.

To **reduce your chances of being burglarized by 38%**, all you need to do is lock your doors and windows!



Burglars actively choose their targets, and will assess a neighborhood by looking for the easiest houses to break into. Ones that have overgrown landscaping providing places to hide, ones that have doors and windows that are unlocked or open, and ones that have older window panes and door frames that are easy to pry open all make easy targets.

THE MOST COMMON
WAYS A BURGLAR
ENTERS A HOME IN TACOMA:



DID YOU KNOW?

Most residential burglaries
actually occur during
the daytime and during
business hours.





Despite the common fear that a burglary will take place in the middle of the night when you are at home and asleep, most residential burglaries actually occur during the daytime and during business hours.

This is because people who steal do not want to be caught by an irate homeowner who calls the police. Burglars make the common assumption that people will be away during the day and homes will be vacant.

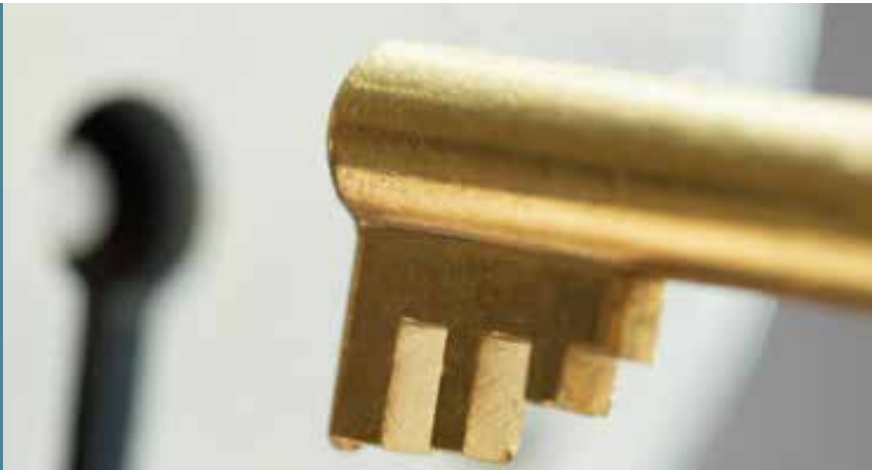
The safest neighborhoods tend to have residents who work varying hours and neighbors who are at home during the day who can spot suspicious activity and call the police.

TIPS



Turn on exterior lights at night and, if possible, install photosensitive exterior lights that automatically turn on and off.

Lock all windows, and exterior doors, gates, or garage doors that provide entry into your property.



LIGHTS

- House numbers should be lit, at least 6 inches high, and in a color that strongly contrasts with the colors of your home. If you are on an alley, you also need house numbers on the back fence or on the back of the house facing the alley.
- Ensure your exterior lights are mounted out of reach, so a burglar can't easily unscrew a light bulb.
- Use a timer to switch lights on and off at various hours during the day and night, to make it look like someone is home when you are away.

DOORS AND WINDOWS

- Install deadbolt locks on all exterior doors, and use 3 inch-long screws to attach the strike plates to the door frames.
- Install double-cylinder deadbolt locks on doors that have glass windows adjacent to the locks. This will keep burglars from being able to break the glass, reach in and open your doors from the inside.
- If your exterior doors have outward facing hinges, replace them with recessed hinges you can buy at any hardware store. Sometimes, burglars will gain entry to a home by pulling out the hinge pins and pushing in the door.
- Replace the interior hinge pins on your exterior doors with ones that have built-in security studs which act as an additional door lock when the hinges are shut and will stay in place even if the exposed hinges are pulled out.
- If possible, replace your exterior doors and door frames with metal or solid core wood instead of the light wood or styrofoam filled doors that were installed by contractors when your house was built.
- Install auxiliary locks on all of your windows, and put dowels in the tracks to keep them from being pried open horizontally or lifted out of the frames/tracks.
- Lock all windows, and exterior doors, gates, or garage doors that provide entry into your property.
- Apply security film on windows that are at risk of being shattered.

HOME SECURITY TIPS

• SLIDING WINDOWS

Purchase auxiliary locks in the security section of the local hardware store. Or, drill holes in the top of the window frame and insert screws, leaving the head of the screws out a little. This helps to prevent the window from being pulled out of the track vertically.

• SECURE HINGES

Hinges on exterior doors should be installed with the pin side facing inside the door frame. This prevents thieves from pulling out the hinge pins and entering your door from the opposite side. You can also purchase hinges at the local hardware store that provide pins to hold the door in place when it's shut.

• THE 2-6 RULE

Trim bushes no higher than 2 feet up from the ground, and limb trees up 6 feet from the ground; this eliminates hiding spots for criminals.

• DOUBLE HUNG WINDOWS

Secure them by drilling through the corners of the sashes and inserting a removable metal pin or nail.

• INTERIOR LIGHTS

A couple of lights left on at night suggest that someone's home. Be sure to put them on timers and regularly change the time they go off and on.

• SOLID CORE EXTERIOR DOORS

Always have a solid core wood or metal exterior door, installed in the frame with 3-inch wood screws. Glass in or adjacent to the door needs an application of security film.

• WELL SECURED SLIDING GLASS WINDOWS

Flathead screws installed in the upper track prevent thieves from lifting the window out of the frame. Auxiliary locks or dowels prevent it from being pried open horizontally.

• PORCH/WALKWAY LIGHTS

High efficiency lights with a photo cell or timer will help keep unwelcome guests from approaching your walkway or front door.

• DOOR EYE VIEWERS

Thieves know they may not gain entry into a home if the occupants get a chance to see them before opening the door. If the door doesn't have a window, it should have a wide angle 180 degree lens. Install a second door eye viewer hole at a height suitable for children too.

• REINFORCED DOOR FRAME

Reinforce the door frame by filling empty spaces between the door jamb and 2x4 stud with a solid piece of wood and shims. This will prevent a thief from pushing or prying back the doorframe.

• EXTERIOR HOUSE LIGHTS

Security lights with a motion or photo cell detector will light up the side area of your house. Make sure you have lights on in the back of the house and alleys too.

• FENCES

Modify wood fences so that they are at least 10 inches off the ground so that anyone hiding behind them can then be seen or use transparent fencing, like chain link.

• GARAGE DOOR

When the garage is securely locked, thieves must resort to more difficult means of entering a home. It also keeps them from stealing property stored in the garage. Secure the door leading from the garage into the house the same way you would an exterior front door.

• EASILY READABLE HOUSE NUMBERS

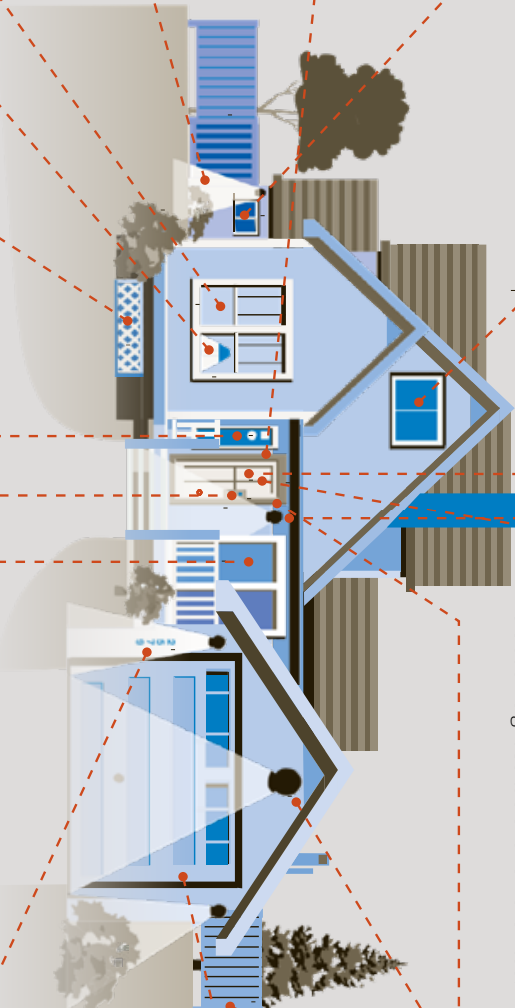
It's easier for emergency services to locate a home in a hurry if the house numbers are large and well lit. Put house numbers in back of your house too, if there's an alley.

• SLIDING GLASS DOORS

A security bar and flathead screws installed in the upper tracks prevent thieves from sliding or lifting the door open. Removable pins in the frames will hold the door in place.

• BARRED WINDOWS

Prevent break-ins through basement space by installing metal grills across the frames. Use a quick-release mechanism for easy exiting in case of fire. Call the Tacoma Fire Department Prevention and Preparedness Bureau at (253) 591-5740 for information on safety code requirements.





Trim back or remove landscaping that provides hiding places around vulnerable doors and windows.

Use **see-through fencing** like picket or chain link fences. Solid fencing may provide you with privacy, but it also provides privacy for burglars as they attempt to break into your home.



OUTDOORS

- Trim back or remove landscaping that provides hiding places around vulnerable doors and windows.
- Apply the 2 to 6-inch Rule. Trim bushes to below 2 feet in height and limb trees 6 feet up from the ground to help remove hiding places.
- Plant thorny bushes under vulnerable ground floor windows.
- Plant climbing, flowering vines that attract bees around vulnerable windows.
- Ensure that any plants or trees in your yard do not block windows or serve as a ladder to your second floor windows or balcony when they mature.
- Use landscape rocks or pea gravel instead of beauty bark. Landscape rocks make a loud crunching noise when someone walks on them,

and can alert you if someone is prowling around outside your home. Beauty bark is silent.

- Use see-through fencing like picket or chain link fences. Solid fencing may provide you with privacy, but it also provides privacy for burglars as they attempt to break into your home.
- Invest in a few “yard art” motion detectors. These are available at hardware stores. They feature built in motion detectors that make noise when someone crosses their paths. Place those strategically around your home.

Organize a **block watch group** by calling Safe Streets at (253) 272-6824.



While on vacation, arrange for someone to pick up your newspapers and mail, and mow the lawn. Don't advertise that your home is vacant.

Consider getting a **monitored alarm system** with audible warnings to scare intruders away.



OTHER GENERAL TIPS

- Consider getting a monitored alarm system with audible warnings to scare intruders away. With a monitored alarm system, you would get a phone call from your alarm company first to assess the situation and, if the situation warrants, the police would be called to the scene.
- Inventory your valuables. Create a list with models and serial numbers, and descriptions of items and costs. Email this list to yourself so you'll always have an electronic copy if your computer is stolen during a burglary. This will be needed by police and your insurance.
- Get an engraver at a hardware store to mark your valuables with your Washington state driver's license number or ID card number. If your name was Mary A. Smith, for example, your engraving would read: WA-SMITHMA123RP-DL. WA is for Washington, followed by the license or ID number, and the DL stands for Driver's License. Police have the ability to look up a driver's license number and obtain your name and address. If an engraved item is stolen from you and then pawned or traded, it can be traced back to you by the number you engraved on it.
- Advertise that you engrave your property by putting Operation ID stickers in your windows. These stickers can be purchased at nnwi.org.
- Lock up any outside ladders, furniture and lawn equipment, including garbage cans, that can be used as leverage to gain entry into upstairs windows.
- Do not try to hide any house keys in your yard. It is best to leave them with a trusted neighbor or friend.
- While on vacation, arrange for someone to pick up your newspapers and mail, and mow the lawn. Don't advertise that your home is vacant.
- Leave your radio or television set on while you are away.

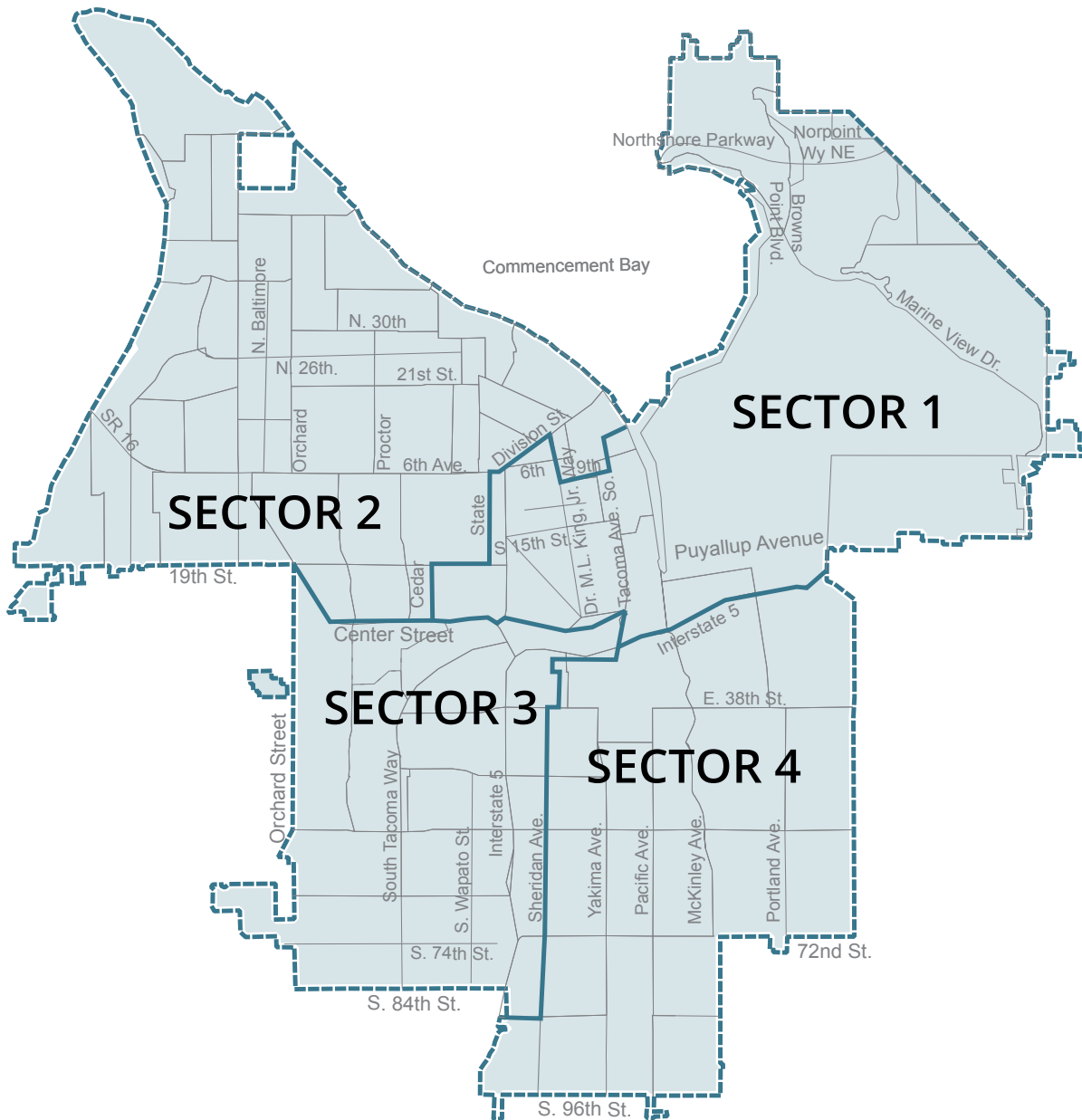
COMMONLY STOLEN ITEMS

Take special care to lock up or store these items safely.

- Medication, especially pain-killer narcotics (Discard any unused medications immediately.)
- Jewelry
- Cash
- Electronics
- Alcohol
- Tools
- Computers
- Guns and other sporting equipment

USEFUL NUMBERS

Crime in Progress	911
Police Non-Emergency	(253) 798-4721
Police Information (Recording).....	(253) 591-5950
Substation Sector 1 – 4731 Norpoint Way NE	(253) 584-7970
1524 Martin Luther King Jr. Way	(253) 594-7800
Substation Sector 2 – 5136 N. 26th St.	(253) 573-2508
Substation Sector 3 – 1501 S. 72nd St.....	(253) 594-7838
Substation Sector 4 – 400 E. 56th St.....	(253) 594-7947
Fire Department Prevention & Preparedness Bureau.....	(253) 591-5740



TACOMAFIRST 311 CUSTOMER SUPPORT CENTER

Did you know that the TacomaFIRST 311 Customer Support Center provides a “one-stop shop” for non-emergency City services, and offers a concierge feel in the way of reception, face-to-face interaction, 311 telephone support, online resources, and mobile app connectivity for Apple and Android devices?

TacomaFIRST 311’s online resources include easy access to more than 700 answers to commonly asked questions, the ability to submit and track more than 70 types of requests for services, and the ability to direct questions to City departments.

You can also email csc@cityoftacoma.org, dial 311 within Tacoma city limits and (253) 591-5000 from anywhere, or stop by the counter in the second floor lobby of the Tacoma Municipal Building (747 Market St., Tacoma).





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