

Basic Crime Prevention Tips

Doors. Use deadbolts with at least a 1" throw. Keep garage doors closed. Double lock sliding glass doors. Use 3" screws in all strikeplates. This will reinforce the door jams. Side garage doors are often easy targets due to thin plywood and glass.

Windows: Utilize secondary locking devices. Eliminate the vertical play in aluminum windows so as to prevent easy removal. Draw drapes at night, especially if you are female.

Trees and Shrubbery. Keep trimmed. Criminals look for hiding places. Shrubbery in front of windows enables anyone to pry unseen at a window or hide while looking inside. Use security shrubbery as recommended by the Crime Prevention Bureau.

Exterior Lighting. Proper placement decreases the incidents of prowling and nighttime burglaries. Report street lights out to Novato Police Department. Motion sensor lighting is recommended. Use vandal resistant light fixtures.

Keys and Locks. Change key codes when moving into a new residence/apartment. Remove house keys when a mechanic has your car. Remember that whoever borrows a key from you can have it duplicated. Do not leave a key under a doormat, flower pot, etc.

Answering the Door. Remember that you do not have to answer your door. Once you do, you are easily vulnerable. Do not open for a stranger. Verify who is there. Have him/her step to where you can see who it is. When in doubt, send him/her away. Be sure that a peephole viewer is installed.

Answering the Phone. If a stranger calls, DO NOT give the person any information, especially your phone number and whether you are home alone.

Going on Vacation. Do not advertise this fact in public. Stop deliveries if they will collect outside. Remove valuables from view. Your residence should still look "lived in." Tell a trusted neighbor who can also have a key, if needed. Use timers for lights and a radio.

Address Numbers. All too often police officers, firefighters, etc. cannot find an address because of hidden or hard to see (blending into background color) letters or numbers. Addresses should be easily visible day or night. Do not depend on painted curb numbers as cars often block them.

Suspicious or Illegal activities. Report these immediately to the Police. Give accurate descriptions of suspects and/or vehicles, including license numbers.

If Your Vehicle Becomes Disabled. It is usually best to stay inside a locked vehicle. If someone stops, ask the person to call for law enforcement help. Do not trust a stranger. Be sure to perform preventive maintenance on your vehicle. Be sure it has plenty of gas.

Alarms. Consider residential, vehicle, and personal alarm systems. Residential alarms should be designed so as to give protection when you are inside as well as when you are away.

If You Are Burglarized. Do not go inside your home if you return to find that your home has been entered illegally. The responsible party may still be inside. Call the Police immediately. Do not touch anything. You may destroy evidence, especially fingerprints.

9-1-1 (Nine-One-One). Use this number to report EMERGENCIES only. Help will respond, even if nothing is said on the phone because the address is shown on a screen.

Carjacking. Be alert to any activity near your vehicle. When approaching your vehicle to enter it, have key in hand and look inside before entering. Keep walking past if someone is loitering nearby. Once inside, lock doors and windows and leave. If a confrontation is unavoidable comply with the carjacker's commands.

Confidential "Hot Tip" Phone Line: 1-800-848-0101

A confidential "Hot Tip" phone line has been installed so that citizens may anonymously report drug or other illegal activity to the Police Department. The caller leaves a message on the phone recorder. Citizens are encouraged to give as much information as they can, including full names, dates of birth, descriptions, addresses, vehicle license numbers, etc.

The information received is forwarded to the Investigations Bureau or other appropriate Department for follow-up.