



**SHERIFF'S
OFFICE**

COUNTY OF GILLESPIE

1601 East Main Street
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**BUDDY MILLS
Sheriff**

**James Segner
Chief Deputy**

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Public Service Announcement

Burglary Prevention Tips From Sheriff Buddy Mills

School is out, vacations are being planned and summer is upon us. Sheriff Mills wants county residents to enjoy the summer with their families. No one wants to be a crime victim but crime statistics reveal 60% of residential burglaries take place during the daytime, with the most in July and August. Sheriff Mills feels this is a good time for county residents to assess their home security.

Gillespie County Sheriff's Office released the following Burglary prevention tips:

The basics:

- Make your home look occupied. Leave lights on when you go out. If you are going to be away for a length of time, connect some lamps to automatic timers to turn them on in the evening and off during the day.
- Make it difficult to break in. Lock all outside doors and windows before you leave the house or go to bed. Even if it is for a short time, lock your doors. Storm doors are an added deterrent. Keep your garage door closed and locked.
- Don't allow daily deliveries of mail, newspapers or flyers build up while you are away. Arrange with the Post Office to hold your mail, or arrange for a friend or neighbor to take them regularly. Arrange for your lawn to be mowed if you are going away for an extended time.
- Check your locks on doors and windows and replace them with secure devices as necessary. Pushbutton locks on doorknobs are easy for burglars to open. Install deadbolt locks on all your outside doors. Sliding glass doors are vulnerable. Special locks are available for better security.
- Other windows may need better locks. Check with a locksmith or hardware store for alternatives.



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Don't tempt a thief:

- Lawn mowers, barbecue pits, and bicycles are best stored out of sight.
- Always lock your garden sheds and garages.
- Use the curtains on your home to block the view of potential burglars.
- Never leave notes on your door such as "Gone shopping."
- Don't leave the boxes of recently purchased electronics at the trash can. Break them down or put them in a bag. Don't advertise what you have in your home.

Locks...get the best:

- No lock, regardless of its quality, can be completely effective. Key-in dead bolt locks provide minimum security. Ask a locksmith for advice on your situation.
- Change locks immediately if your keys are lost or stolen. When moving into a new home, have all locks changed.
- Talk to a locksmith about reinforcing your door frames and using longer screws to better secure the strike plate in the door frame.

Targeting the Outside:

- Have adequate exterior lighting. A motion-sensitive light is recommended for backyards.
- Trim trees and shrubs so that they cannot be used as hiding places for intruders.
- Make sure your door hinges are on the inside.
- Windows:
- Most windows can be pinned for security. One method that can be used is to drill a 3/16" hole on a slight downward slant through the inside window frame and halfway into the outside frame - place a nail in the hole to secure the window.
- There are many devices that can help make your windows more resistant. Ask your locksmith for alternatives.



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Alarms:

An alarm system is excellent for home security. It provides peace of mind to homeowners, especially while on vacation. There is a wide variety of alarm systems on the market. Make inquiries to several different companies to determine the best security system for your home.

Other precautions you can take:

- Never leave keys under doormats, flowerpots, mailboxes or other "secret" hiding places -- burglars know where to look for hidden keys.
- Keep a detailed inventory of your valuable possessions, including a description of the items, date of purchase and original value, and serial numbers, and keep a copy in a safe place away from home -- this is a good precaution in case of fires or other disasters. Make a photographic or video record of valuable objects, heirlooms and antiques. Your insurance company can provide assistance in making and keeping your inventory.
- Be a good neighbor. CALL LAW ENFORCEMENT if you notice anything suspicious in your neighborhood. You can organize, or participate in a neighborhood watch program. Knowing your neighbors and reporting suspicious activity is one of the best ways to prevent burglaries. You have to be the eyes of your neighborhood. And remember you can always remain a pair of anonymous eyes!
- Mark your valuables with your driver's license number with an engraver. Marked items are harder for a burglar to dispose of and easier for law enforcement officers to recover.

If Your Home Is Broken Into:

- DO NOT ENTER - the perpetrator may still be inside. Use a neighbor's phone or a cell phone to call law enforcement. Do not touch anything or clean up until law enforcement officers have inspected for evidence.
- Write down the license plate numbers and description of any suspicious vehicles and note the descriptions of any suspicious persons.

If you have any questions or need additional crime prevention information please contact Deputy Joe Folse at 997-7585.