

Your Home Perimeter

When a criminal looks at your home, what would attract or discourage him from burglarizing it?

A well-manicured lawn can be quite important in emphasizing that you pay close attention to your home. In the eyes of a burglar, an overgrown lawn suggests a vacancy and possible burglary target.

Overgrown or extremely large trees or shrubs can hide burglary activity, especially around your home's entry points. For security's sake have them trimmed or moved. Also trim all tree limbs. The way they hug your home may be artful, but burglars don't see them as art. They view them as ladders!

Fences can be an effective part of your security, but they may be a liability in hiding a burglar's activity. Tall, chain link fences provide security without sacrificing visibility.

Dogs can also be a valuable asset to homeowners. Any dog that barks at strangers brings unwanted attention to a thief. Larger dogs can even discourage an intruder from entering your yard or home.

Streetlights are another important crime deterrent for your neighborhood, but your personal residence should also be well lit. Porch lights and motion-sensitive lighting are recommended for most homes. With a motion-sensitive light, an intruder is bathed in light the instant he steps into your yard. Also consider photoelectric lighting, which automatically switches on at dusk and turns itself off at dawn so that you don't need to constantly turn the porch lights on and off. In addition, low voltage outdoor lighting provides illumination in several areas around your home and yard.

Timers on outdoor lamps, radios and televisions create the impression that someone is at home. They can be used to control lamps during the evening and radios and televisions during the day. However, do not set your timers to turn on every light in

you home promptly at the same time each night. Burglars are sophisticated enough to recognize this as a sure signal that no one is home. Some timers have a built-in random pattern that slightly varies the daily ON/OFF time and suggests somebody is moving throughout your residence.

You do not want to help a burglar break into your home, so watch what you leave in your yard. Be sure to put tools away after you are done. Your own ladders, screwdrivers, hammers or pliers can be used against you.