



Stonebridge

HOME SECURITY PLANNING

CERTIFICATE COURSE

Sample Pages

SECURITY OF THE HOME



TUTOR TALK: The Learning Outcomes for this assignment are:

- Examine the various aspects of maintaining a safe and secure environment for a family

INTRODUCTION

Consider two houses at night-time. One is in complete darkness, the other has lights on and music playing from a radio or hi-fi. Consider the same two houses during the day, one has windows open, although protected by burglar bars, there is a dog in the garden and a radio playing indoors. The other house is completely shut up, the house is silent and there is milk on the front porch.

These instances show just how important it is to make the house appear to be occupied, as well as secure. Figures show that eight out of ten burglaries take place when the house is empty. This is often because the owners have failed to take adequate security measures.



Once a burglar has decided that the house is not occupied, he will make a study of the security arrangements. Even if all the windows and doors are locked, it is important to use the locks every time the house is left empty, even if it is only for a few seconds. In three burglaries out of ten, the burglar gets in through a door or window that has been carelessly left open. Seven out of ten of burglaries involve forced entry. However, this make mean no more than lifting patio doors, that have poor security, from their tracks, levering open the back door with a jemmy, or forcing a window that is secured by means of a traditional fastener.

There are many reasons for a person to make a decision to improve the security of his home, these include:

- The house has been burgled previously.
- There have been burglaries in the immediate area.
- A neighbourhood watch scheme has alerted the householder of the importance of home security.
- A person has just moved into a new house.
- The householder wishes to qualify for discounts on the “contents of house” insurance.

To begin with the householder should work to a plan. It is necessary to know where the home is most vulnerable. The position of the break in ratio to the house is shown in the following table.

Part of property where beak in occurs	Percentage
The rear of the property.	60%
The front of the property.	30%
The side of the property.	6%
The roof.	4%

Therefore, if the householder is restrained by a tight budget, it is better to make priorities and to concentrate on the areas which are most vulnerable.

The type of house also requires consideration. Burglars do not only concentrate on expensive houses and flats, the lower priced properties are just as much at risk. A house may back on to neighbouring properties, which makes the front more vulnerable. An upper storey flat may only provide access through the front door, therefore this is where security efforts should be concentrated.

If the house is not visible to passers by or neighbours, then the intruder will have more time to overcome any physical security devices. Therefore, in such cases, a remote monitor, connected to an alarm should be fitted. If possible this alarm should also be connected to a central monitoring station.

To assist in finding the weak links in a security system, one should enlist the help of a friend or possibly a crime prevention officer from the police. Then, in his presence, the house should be locked up as if the householder was going out. The property should then be surveyed from outside, and a pretence made that the entry keys have been lost. Then find out how easy it is to gain access. Probably two or three points of easy access will be discovered. This is what thieves do during their pre-call investigation. These points of entry normally include the back door, front door and ground floor windows. Entry is gained by breaking a small pane of glass, using brute force, or by the simple method of using the door key, which has been left in a secret place for the use of some other member of the family.

Once the security has been improved, it is essential to remember to use it, even if you are only slipping next door, or down the road to the shop for a few minutes. This should be combined with a measure of common sense in order to let the house appear to be unoccupied.

Once a person has decided that home security must be improved, the next step is to decide where to start. Protection measures can be split into three categories:

- common sense precautions.
- physical security.
- electronic security.

Physical security covers such details as door and window locks, padlocks, door chains, viewers, security marking, security doors, grilles, shutters and safes.

Electronic security includes intruder alarm systems, security lighting, audio and video door systems, and closed circuit television monitoring.

Priority should always be given to physical security, such as fitting good locks to doors and windows. This is the first step in any home security plan.



The level of security depends upon the available finances, therefore it is necessary to concentrate on the basics, and it is useless spending a lot of money on a safe if the home has not been secured against unlawful entry. Approximately fifty per cent of burglars break in through windows and forty per cent through doors, so it is sensible to concentrate one's efforts on these areas.

If a larger sum of money can be afforded, then consideration should be given to securing outbuildings with locks and padlocks, and installing security lighting devices. It may even be possible to consider the installation of an intruder alarm system. The initial outlay may be high, but it is a small price to pay for the security of the home and family. In addition, fitting extra security often qualifies for discounts on insurance policies.

DOORS

The front door

The front door is usually taken as the first place where security begins, and one of the first things that should be carried out after changing house, is to change the locks. However, there are other things to be done before the front door is considered.

The first thing to look at is the doorframe. It should be securely secured to the surrounding wall. It should not be warped or be rotting. It should be fixed at the head and the threshold, and down the sides at intervals of not more than 60 centimetres.

The next thing to consider is the door itself. It should be at least 45 millimetres thick and preferably made of solid wood. The door stile, which is the depth of solid wood that is available to cut into from the edge of the door to the centre of the keyhole should be at least 12 centimetres, to allow space for a mortise lock. It is unfortunate, but many homes, especially flats have been fitted with inexpensive, hollow eggshell or plywood doors. These give way quite easily when a little pressure is applied. These doors should be replaced with solid hardwood core ones, or even better, with laminate doors. There should be a minimum of glass, and the doors should be without panels. These panels are usually made of plywood, and they are kicked in quite easily.

Glass panels reduce security and if possible, they should be replaced with stronger, laminated glass.

If the door has a letterbox, it should be of the minimum size that is recommended by the Post Office. This size will not allow a hand to be pushed through to open the lock from inside.

A door viewer and a door chain are excellent precautions.

The front door should be fitted with three strong hinges. On outward opening doors, hinge bolts should be fitted midway between the hinges. The hinge bolts prevent the door being levered off its hinges from the outside, if the hinge pins are successfully removed.

Back and side doors

It is normal for the back and side doors to be of weaker construction than the front doors, and often they are inadequately secured, sometimes with only an inferior two or three lever lock. These doors, being out of sight, provide an easy entry point for the thief.

These doors should also be fitted with hinge bolts.

Reinforcing the doors

There are several methods by which the door, door frame and door lock can be reinforced. The frames can be reinforced by utilising steel sections. The doors can be given additional protection by using vandal and attack resistant facings. These can be either of steel, laminates of wood or plywood, glass, or reinforced plastic, which is a particularly tough material. These facings are sometimes incorporated as a layer beneath the wood veneer. Therefore, in appearance, the door appears to be normal.

A London bar is a steel strip that fits the entire length of the door. It protects the rim lock on one side and reinforces the frame on the hinge side. This bar is designed to spread the force of an attack. This can also be accomplished if a multi-point locking system is used. A multi-point locking system is a series of three or more locks that are operated simultaneously from one point. Some multi-point systems can be mortised into a new, or an existing door by an experienced locksmith. In addition, there is a surface mounted kit available that locks in three points and incorporates a door chain. This system needs a door stile of at least 10 centimetres and a visible doorframe of at least 35 millimetres.

Reinforcement kits are also available which are designed to fit around the lock area and protect it from attack. There are also lockable and tamper proof letter boxes, some of which are even designed to resist arson attacks.