

PROTECTOR INSTINCT LLC

Home Defense Checklist & Guidebook

A practical guide to hardening your home against burglary
and building a plan to protect your family.

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— SECTION 1 —

Doors & Entry Points

Doors are the primary entry point in over 34% of burglaries. The door itself is rarely the weak link — the frame and hardware are. A solid-core door with a flimsy strike plate offers almost no kick-in resistance. Fix the frame first.

PRO TIP

Most burglars spend less than 60 seconds attempting entry. Forcing that to 90–120 seconds causes the vast majority to abandon the attempt. Every upgrade below adds time.

Door Frame & Strike Plate

- ★ Replace short strike plate screws (usually 3/4") with 3" #8 wood screws
Short screws anchor only into the door jamb. Long screws bite into the structural stud, resisting kick-in forces of 300+ lbs.
- ★ Install a heavy-duty ANSI Grade 1 strike plate (minimum 4-screw pattern)
Look for steel plates at least 2.5" wide with a reinforced lip.
- Reinforce the full door jamb with a steel door armor kit (e.g., Door Armor MAX)
Covers hinge side, latch side, and top — turns the entire frame into a steel shell.
- Inspect door frames for rot or softwood damage; repair before adding hardware

Deadbolts & Locks

- ★ Install a Grade 1 deadbolt with a minimum 1" throw
ANSI Grade 1 is the residential gold standard. The bolt must extend fully 1" into the reinforced frame.
- Use a double-cylinder deadbolt on any door with glass within 40" of the lock
Prevents a burglar from breaking glass and turning the knob. Note: requires a key to exit — keep one accessible for fire egress.
- Ensure all exterior door hinges are interior-side mounted, or use non-removable hinge pins
- Add a door barricade bar (e.g., Master Lock 265DCCBAR) for doors that open inward
- Install a wide-angle (200°) peephole or video doorbell to identify visitors before opening

Garage Doors

- ★ Treat the door between garage and living space as a full exterior door — deadbolt required
This is one of the most overlooked entry points. A deadbolt here is essential.
- Secure the emergency release cord with a zip tie or padlock to block the coat-hanger trick
Burglars can insert a hooked wire through the top panel gap to pull the release cord in seconds.

- Use a ground anchor or garage door defender when the vehicle is away for extended periods
- Verify garage door sensors and auto-reverse function properly

— SECTION 2 —

Windows & Sliding Doors

Windows account for roughly 23% of burglary entry points. Ground-floor and concealed windows are highest risk. Reinforcement doesn't require bars — modern options are unobtrusive and effective.

- ★ Install key-operated or sash pin locks on all ground-floor double-hung windows
A window pin (\$2–5) prevents the sash from being lifted from outside even if the latch is defeated.
- ★ Place a cut-down wooden dowel or Charlie bar in all sliding door tracks
Prevents the door from being slid open or lifted off its track. A cut broom handle fits most tracks.
- Apply 8 mil security window film to all ground-floor windows
Film holds broken glass together, making rapid silent entry extremely difficult.
- Install window break sensors on ground-floor and basement windows
- Test every window lock — replace any faulty latches immediately
- Trim shrubs and trees that provide concealment next to ground-floor windows
- Consider window bars on basement windows — ensure at least one has a quick-release for fire egress

— SECTION 3 —

Alarm Systems & Surveillance

Homes without security systems are statistically far more likely to be targeted. Even visible alarm signage acts as a deterrent. A monitored system with cameras is a force multiplier.

Alarm System

- ★ Install a monitored alarm system (professional or self-monitored via app)
Professional monitoring (ADT, SimpliSafe, Ring Alarm) ensures a response even if you miss the alert. Self-monitoring is lower cost but requires you to act.
- ★ Post alarm signage and stickers at all entry points — front yard, doors, windows
Visible deterrence alone reduces targeting. Burglars actively look for and avoid alarmed properties.
- Mount the control panel away from the front door and out of window sightlines
A panel near the entry gives a burglar time to smash it before the alarm response triggers.
- Install door/window contact sensors on ALL exterior doors and ground-floor windows
- Add motion sensors covering main interior paths — hallways, stairways
- Include a glass-break sensor in rooms with large windows or sliding doors
- Test the alarm system monthly — confirm the monitoring center receives the test signal

Surveillance Cameras

- ★ Install cameras at the front door, back door, and garage at minimum
Aim for chest-to-head height at entry points. Minimum 1080p resolution.
- Use cameras with local storage (SD card or NVR) as a backup to cloud storage
- Retain footage for at least 30 days
- Store the NVR/DVR in a locked, concealed location — not obvious to an intruder

— SECTION 4 —

Exterior Lighting & Landscaping

Darkness is a burglar's best tool. Motion-activated lighting eliminates hiding spots, startles intruders, and signals neighbors. Paired with trimmed landscaping, it removes concealment entirely.

Lighting

- ★ Install motion-activated floodlights at all entry points (front, back, sides)
Minimum 2,500 lumens per fixture. LED fixtures are low-cost and long-lasting.
- Use timer-controlled interior lights and smart plugs when away to simulate occupancy
- Install dusk-to-dawn sensors on porch, driveway, and walkway fixtures
- Light any recessed areas, alcoves, or gates where someone could hide
- Inspect and replace burned exterior bulbs promptly — a dark fixture signals neglect

Landscaping

- ★ Trim shrubs near doors and windows to below window sill height
CPTED principle: remove concealment. A visible home is a safer home.
- Keep trees trimmed so branches don't allow access to second-floor windows or roof
- Plant thorny bushes (hawthorn, barberry, holly) under ground-floor windows — natural deterrent
- Ensure house numbers are clearly visible from the street for emergency responders
- Consider gravel or crushed stone near entry points — footsteps are audible

— SECTION 5 —

Safe Rooms & Shelter-in-Place

A safe room is a pre-designated space where your family retreats if an intruder enters. It doesn't need to be a vault. A reinforced bedroom with a solid lock, a phone, and a practiced plan is sufficient.

- ★ Designate a primary safe room — ideally a master bedroom with an exterior window for egress

Goal: lock the door, call 911, and wait for police. Avoid confronting the intruder.

- ★ Replace the safe room door with a solid-core door and Grade 1 deadbolt

Most interior doors are hollow-core and offer minimal resistance. This door is your last barrier.

- Keep a charged cell phone accessible in the safe room at all times
- Post local emergency numbers (non-911 police line, trusted neighbors) inside the safe room
- Keep a flashlight and basic first-aid kit stored in the safe room
- Verify the safe room window can be used for emergency egress — test it with every family member
- Consider a door barricade bar (e.g., Master Lock 265DCCBAR) for additional interior reinforcement
- Discuss and rehearse the shelter-in-place plan with all family members, including children

IMPORTANT

If an intruder enters your home, shelter in place and call 911 — unless you must move to reach children or others in immediate danger. Do not confront the intruder unless there is no other option. Your goal is to survive and let law enforcement respond.

— SECTION 6 —

Firearms Storage & Access

Responsible firearms ownership means balancing rapid accessibility for defense with absolute security against unauthorized access — especially by children. Quick-access safes solve both simultaneously.

- ★ Store all firearms not in immediate use in a locked safe, vault, or secure container
Unsecured firearms are a leading source of weapons recovered from crimes. Secure storage is a legal and moral obligation.
- ★ Use a biometric or RFID quick-access safe for any firearm designated for home defense
Enables access in seconds under stress without fumbling with keys. Look for UL-listed models with tamper alerts.
- Bolt the quick-access safe to a wall stud or solid surface — not just resting in place
- Store long gun ammunition separately from firearms; keep handgun safes out of children's reach
- Train all authorized family members to operate the safe reliably under stress — practice regularly
- Maintain all firearms in proper working condition; inspect and clean per manufacturer schedule
- Know your state and local use-of-force laws — consult a licensed attorney before relying on any firearm for defense
Laws regarding castle doctrine, duty to retreat, and defense of others vary significantly by jurisdiction.
- Consider a full-size fire-rated gun safe (30-min+ rated) for rifles, shotguns, and valuables

LEGAL NOTICE

Firearms laws vary significantly by state, county, and municipality. Nothing in this section constitutes legal advice. Consult a licensed attorney in your jurisdiction regarding use-of-force statutes, storage requirements, castle doctrine, and duty-to-retreat laws before relying on any firearm for home defense.

— SECTION 7 —

Neighborhood & Community Defense

Your home doesn't exist in isolation. Active neighbors and shared information create a security network that no hardware can replicate. Community-level deterrence is among the most cost-effective investments available.

- ★ Introduce yourself to immediate neighbors — exchange phone numbers
A neighbor who knows you will call if something looks wrong. A stranger won't.
- ★ Join or form a neighborhood watch program through your local police department
Most departments offer free support, signage, and training. Active watches reduce burglary rates measurably.
- Use a neighborhood communication app (Nextdoor, GroupMe) to share security alerts
- Coordinate mail and package pickup with neighbors when traveling
An overflowing mailbox signals an unoccupied home.
- Report suspicious activity to your local non-emergency police line — do not confront
- Post 'No Soliciting' signage — some pre-burglary reconnaissance uses door-to-door pretexts
- Know your HOA's security rules and participate in community lighting or access control efforts

— SECTION 8 —

Family Emergency Plan

A plan discussed in advance is worth ten times more than one improvised under stress. Every member of your household should be able to execute the plan without instruction.

Communication Plan

- ★ Establish a family code word signaling a real emergency (vs. a drill)
Eliminates confusion. Choose something you would never say casually.
- ★ Designate a primary out-of-state contact that all family members call or text in an emergency
Local lines can be overwhelmed after an incident. An out-of-state relay is more reliable.
- Save all emergency numbers in every family member's phone: 911, local police non-emergency, neighbors
- Identify two rally points: one near the home (mailbox), one farther away (school, community building)

Home Intrusion Protocol

- ★ Agree on one rule: if you hear a break-in, everyone moves to the safe room immediately
Confusion about roles during an intrusion is dangerous. One rule, rehearsed, eliminates hesitation.
- Assign a responsible adult or older child to collect younger children en route to the safe room
- Once in the safe room: lock the door, call 911, do not open until police physically confirm identity
- Rehearse the plan at minimum twice per year — treat it like a fire drill

Vacation & Extended Absence

- ★ Do not post travel plans or vacation photos on social media until you return
Broadcasting your absence broadcasts a target.
- Use light timers and smart plugs to simulate occupancy — vary the schedule nightly
- Pause mail and newspaper delivery, or have a neighbor collect them daily
- Notify a trusted neighbor and provide a contact number
- Physically walk every door and window before departure — do not rely on memory
- Verify the alarm system is armed via app after leaving the property

— YOUR COMPLETE HOME DEFENSE TO-DO LIST —

Master Checklist

HOW TO USE

Print this page and work through it systematically. ★ items are highest-priority and lowest-cost. Complete all ★ items within 30 days and all remaining items within 90 days.

Doors & Entry Points

- ★ Replace strike plate screws with 3" wood screws
- ★ Install ANSI Grade 1 deadbolt (1" throw)
- Install steel door jamb armor
- ★ Deadbolt between garage and living space
- Secure garage emergency release cord
- Install video doorbell or wide-angle peephole

Windows & Sliding Doors

- ★ Sash pins on all ground-floor windows
- ★ Charlie bar in all sliding door tracks
- 8 mil security film on ground-floor windows
- Window break sensors installed

Alarm & Surveillance

- ★ Monitored alarm system installed
- ★ Alarm signage posted at all entries
- Contact sensors on all exterior doors and ground-floor windows
- Interior motion sensors on main paths
- ★ Cameras at front door, back door, and garage

Lighting & Landscaping

- ★ Motion-activated floodlights at all entries
- Dusk-to-dawn porch and driveway lighting
- ★ Shrubs trimmed below window sill height
- Thorny plants under ground-floor windows

Safe Room

- ★ Safe room designated — solid-core door with deadbolt
- ★ Charged phone accessible in safe room
- Flashlight and first-aid kit in safe room
- Shelter-in-place drill rehearsed with family

Firearms Storage

- ★ All firearms in locked safe or secure container
- ★ Quick-access safe installed for home defense firearm
- Quick-access safe bolted to structure
- Authorized users trained to operate safe under stress
- Local use-of-force laws reviewed with attorney

Neighborhood

- ★ Phone numbers exchanged with immediate neighbors
- ★ Neighborhood watch joined or formed
- Neighborhood alert group set up

Family Emergency Plan

- ★ Family code word established
- ★ Emergency numbers saved in all phones
- Two family rally points identified
- ★ Home intrusion protocol agreed upon
- Emergency drill rehearsed
- ★ Travel/absence security protocol followed

— TRAINING — EDUCATION — PREPAREDNESS —

About Protector Instinct LLC

Protector Instinct LLC provides elite 1-on-1 defensive firearms training in Las Vegas, Nevada. Founded by Jaden Garlington — U.S. Marine Corps veteran, artillery ballistics specialist (MOS 0844), certified instructor, and Range Safety Officer — every program is built on one mission: developing real-world defensive capability in people who refuse to be victims.

For information on defensive pistol training, concealed carry programs, AR-15 training, and trauma first aid, visit protectorinstinct.com or call **(702) 900-5855**.

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