

# CHULA VISTA POLICE DEPARTMENT

## Preventing Home Burglaries at Apartment Residences

### COMMUNITY RELATIONS UNIT



The apartment lifestyle makes it easy for criminals to observe the behavioral patterns of residents. In many cases, the burglar may live in the same neighborhood or be acquainted with your neighbors, so be aware and remember, **YOU are an important partner in the fight against crime.**

To reduce your apartment security risk, show a potential apartment thief you've taken steps to "harden the target," which should serve as a deterrent and send that thief elsewhere.

### Steps Apartment Residents Can Take:

- **Keep your windows and doors locked** especially when you're gone. This includes patio doors and windows on upper floors. Make it a habit to always lock the door behind you, whether you're entering or exiting. Never leave a door unlocked for friends or roommates, or if you're just leaving to take out the trash or check the mail. When you're at home, only open windows in rooms of the apartment you're using at the time, and use security latches when they're open. These latches should prevent windows from being opened more than six inches.
- **Make your home look and feel "lived in."** When away have your mail held at the post office, and stop the newspaper. Leave a radio on at a conversational level, and when gone for several days, use timers for lights or leave a lamp on in one or two rooms.
- **Make friends with your neighbors,** and ask a trusted neighbor to keep an eye on your apartment, remove any door hangers, or package notification notes. Many burglaries occur when an apartment is unoccupied, so don't advertise your apartment is vacant.
- **Keep your blinds or curtains closed.** Don't tempt potential thieves by allowing them to see all the great things you have inside.
- **Be aware of how sliding doors are notoriously easy to open.** Keep them locked, and use a stick in the sliding track to prevent them from being forced open. Old sliding doors can often be jiggled right off the track and out of the frame.
- **Beware of people** trying doorknobs, or looking through windows of apartments and vehicles. Often burglars will carry empty backpacks or knapsacks to carry stolen property away. Call the police to report suspicious persons and activities.



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- **Be careful who you invite inside your unit.** Casual acquaintances with ill intent that have been inside your unit and seen or heard about your valuables may come back later to steal them (or may take smaller items, such as laptops, while visiting).
- **Be cautious when using modern technology.** Facebook, Twitter, GPS-enabled cell phones, and blogs have created more ways to divulge sensitive information and make it available to a larger group of people. The average Facebook user has 130 friends — which means he/she also has an average of 16,900 friends of friends. And even if you are careful about whom you accept as friends, there's no way of knowing how careful your friends are. Announcing your plans for the night can be dangerous because of any criminals that might be sitting in their home following your comings and goings on Facebook and Twitter. So be careful of oversharing the details of your life and posting sensitive information about your whereabouts.
- **Never put your unit number on your keys or key chain.**
- **Ask your landlord to re-key your apartment to prevent access by previous tenants.**
- **Use your peephole to make sure you know your visitors.**
- **Vary your routines; burglars have been known to study the movements of their targets.** If you live close to your job, go home occasionally at lunchtime, establishing the idea that you're subject to come home at anytime. Varying your routine even a little bit could make potential thieves too nervous to target your apartment.
- **When away for an extended period of time**, consider removing property, especially jewelry, from your residence and storing it in a safe deposit box or in another secure location. If jewelry is extremely valuable or used infrequently, consider permanently storing it in a safe deposit box.
- **Record serial numbers of your property** and keep those records in a safe place outside of your apartment.
- **Consider purchasing renter's insurance** to cover the value of your property in the event your apartment is burglarized.
- **Report suspicious activity** by calling the Chula Vista Police non-emergency dispatch line at **(619) 691-5151**. Follow-up by notifying your management.