

Alarms

Before you invest in an alarm system, weigh the cost against your need. How valuable is your merchandise? How great is your risk?

After installing an alarm, let burglars know by putting warning signs in windows and entrances.

Every alarm system should include:

- fail-safe battery backup fire sensing capability
- feedback device to check the system

For an opinion on your security needs, ask for a Risk Assessment of your home or business by calling the Stevensville Police Department at (406) 777-5271.

Keep a complete up-to-date inventory of your merchandise and property: office machinery, personal belongings, etc. Put a copy in your safety deposit box or at a location away from the business site. Also, mark your property with an identifying number.

Remember

Locks and alarms can't prevent a burglary unless they're in use. Establish a routine for "closing up shop," locking doors and windows, setting up alarms.

If a burglar breaks in

Your best protection against an intruder is visibility: well-lit open spaces, low counters, and large, uncluttered display windows –these precautions keep the burglar in the spotlight.

Put your safe and cash register up front so that the burglar's activity will be visible from the outside. Empty your cash drawers and leave them open so a burglar won't be tempted to break them open. Anchor safes in concrete, and make sure they have combination locks. Put locks on all interior doors and hook them into your alarm system. (Always check fire regulations before installing such locks.)

If you suspect a burglary:

- Don't enter; burglar may be inside
- Don't open for business; employees and customers may unwittingly alter valuable evidence
- Call the police immediately



Burglary Prevention

Stevensville Police Department
102 Main St. Ste D
Stevensville, Mt 59870



Barriers to Burglary

Burglary is a crime of opportunity. Make the burglar's work risky and difficult, and you stand a good chance of stopping them before they get in.

Your first line of defense

To a burglar visibility means vulnerability. They hide behind fences and shrubbery. The key is to keep trespassers out while keeping your property visible. Use picket or chain link fences. Keep hedges clipped down around waist level.

On the outside looking in

Burglars try the doors and windows first. If burglars have difficulty there, chances are they will move on to another property.

Doors

Locks. The strongest are deadbolt locks with a minimum of 1" throw bolt containing a hardened, saw-resistant steel insert. Attach the strike plate to the doorframe with 4" screws. The double cylinder deadbolt lock requires a key from both sides, preventing a burglar from breaking the glass in the door and turning the knob from the inside. Make sure the cylinder of the lock has a steel guard—a ring around the key section. The cylinder guard should be tapered, or it should rotate around the key section to prevent wrenching.

Remember though, a double-cylinder deadbolt can also block your exit in an emergency. Check with your local law enforcement agency or building inspector to see if these locks are permitted in your area.

Hinges. Doors that swing out have hinges on the outside. A burglar can easily remove the hinge pins and lift the door out. To foil this, remove the center screw from each side of the hinge and insert a metal pin or headless screw on one side. When the door is closed, the end of the pin will fit into the opposite hole. Thus even if the pins are removed, the door will remain bolted to the frame.

Windows

Protect windows by putting grates, grill work, or bars over them; or cover glass on the inside with a clear polycarbonate sheet. The sheet should extend 1-1/2 inch beyond the perimeter of the glass and be bolted to the door. Space the bolts approximately every 3 inches. Unbreakable safety glass is also available, but it is more expensive.

Other entrances

Skylights, ventilation ducts, and fire escapes tempt burglars because these openings usually are not visible from the street. Protect skylights and ducts with metal grates and iron bars. The first stair of a fire escape should be too high for the

average adult to reach from the ground.

The door or window leading to the escape should be equipped with emergency exit features: window guards should be removable or hinged to allow for an emergency exit. Keys to locked windows or doors should be nearby.

Key Control

Because any lock gives way to a key, practice good key control.

- Label keys with a code indicating back door, receiving door, display case, etc.
- Engrave "Do Not Duplicate" on all keys.
- Restrict key-access to your most trusted employees; maintain a log to record removal and return.
- Consider having locks re-keyed when an employee leaves your business.

Lighting

Light is a great crime deterrent. In fact, some states have minimum standards for exterior lighting. Light up all dark areas, especially doors and windows. If your business is in a poorly lit commercial area, join with other merchants to petition local government for more lights or pool funds and underwrite the cost yourselves.