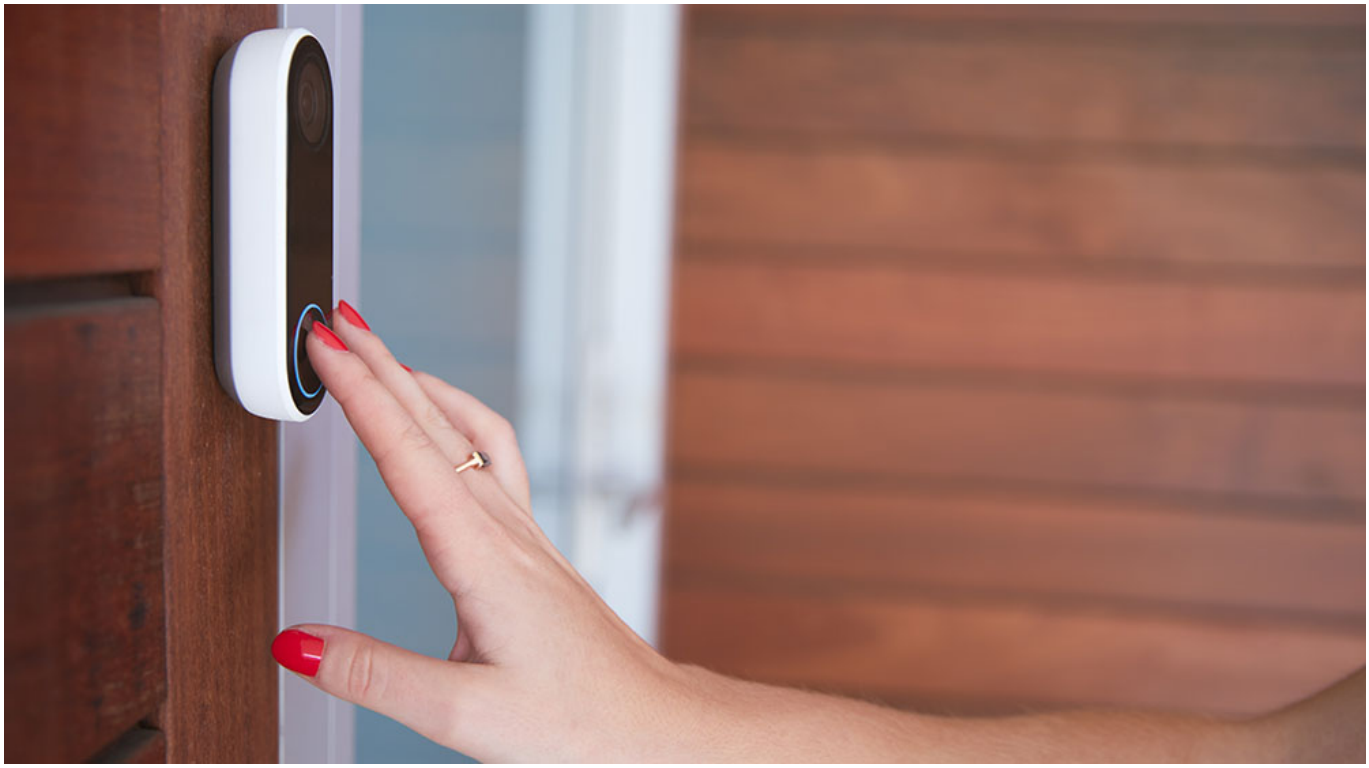
These 13 things can make your home a target for burglary.



Burglars know what to look for when they're picking target homes for theft … and it might not be what you think. To help keep your loved ones, your possessions, and the place that matters most safe, we're sharing the usual and unusual things burglars look for before a break-in and how you can secure your home. Do any surprise you?

1. **No visible security systems.** If burglars don't see a physical camera or security system, a house can become more of a target for theft. In addition to having a camera at your front door, consider installing one on sliding doors or back doors. Install ample lighting around all areas of your home and yard, too.

2. **Remote homes.** Secluded homes or those at the ends of streets can be greater targets. That's because there are fewer watchful eyes and neighbors around.

3. **Homes located near woods.** Houses that back up to trees give burglars quick and covered escape routes. In addition, homes with open backyards that aren't fenced in give a similar path out.

4. **An unkempt yard.** If newspapers pile up, garbage cans aren't brought in, grass is long, or shrubs haven't been maintained, it can indicate homeowners who have been away or aren't often home. Tidy up your yard and have neighbors bring in newspapers while you're away.

5. **Well-maintained homes.** On the opposite end of the spectrum, homes that are very opulent or well-manicured with fresh paint, flowers, outdoor décor, etc. give the impression of expensive items inside. If your home falls into this category, ensure it's well-lit and armed with security systems around all entrances.

6. **Package pileups.** If you're going on vacation, avoid ordering packages that will be delivered while you're gone. Packages on the porch or mail that isn't brought in from the mailbox can be telltale signs the home is currently empty. Again, ask a neighbor to retrieve these for you.

7. **Homes with back garages or sheds.** Lawn mowers, lawn equipment, storage boxes, and more … homes aren't the only things targeted for theft. Back sheds or detached garages can be goldmines for burglars if they aren't well secured.

8. **Open windows or window A/C units.** Leaving a window open at night can practically invite a burglar indoors without making a sound. Window A/C units can also be removed easily, leaving a window open to theft.

9. **Expensive items in view.** Our recommendation? Take a walk around your property, looking in the windows as a burglar would do. If you see gaming consoles, expensive jewelry or watches, fine art, or other electronics on display, that means burglars can see them, too. Stash valuables from view, where possible and install blinds or drapes to close at night. Also, add curtains, blinds, or window tinting to garage and basement windows.

10. **Spare keys stashed in sight.** Keys under a mat, in a container by the garage door, under a front rock, in a lock box: these tricks are known and easily spotted. Instead of hiding a key outdoors, consider giving a spare key to a trusted neighbor so they can keep it locked securely inside their home in case of emergency.

11. **Accessible ladders or stools.** Keep your ladder leaning against your garage or shed? Have tall barstools or chairs in the backyard? Burglars can use these items to help get up to a window or roof without the hassle of bringing their own.

12. **Garage door openers.** If you have a car in the driveway with a garage door opener on the visor, be aware. Burglars can break a car window and use the opener to gain access to your garage or even to your home. Keep them stashed in a glove compartment or bring garage door openers inside overnight.

13. **Lack of lighting.** Heading away for the night or an extended length of time? Connect some lamps to automatic timers to turn them on in the evening and off during the day. Switching up which lights you turn on makes it look even more like someone is home and helps to further deter burglars.

Knowing how to secure your home and having all family members follow safety rules, like locking doors and closing windows, can help prevent burglary on your property. Looking for even more protection? Talk to your local, independent agent about how a comprehensive homeowners policy can add a layer of security.

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