



**HOW TO PROTECT
YOUR HOME AND FAMILY**

How to Protect Your Home and Family



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Is Your Home a Target?

While there is a risk of break-in and burglary to almost any home, some homes seem to suffer greater risk than others. This is partly due to their location. The geographical area in which a home is built is in some cases more prone to robbery. Historically, poorer areas are more likely to have a higher crime rate, especially if your home is slightly more valuable than most in the area. But in some cases a middle class area that is next to a poor area might suffer a high crime rate.

Where your home is located is also a factor in being a target for break-ins. If the house is in an out-of-way area, then that can make it a target, as would-be thieves feel more secure. Thieves may see a house in an area where there is a lot of foot and automotive traffic as a high-risk area, as their activities can be seen more easily.

However, if the house is so isolated that it is hard to get to, then that would be a factor in its favor. Thieves are not going to go too far out of their way to rob a house because it will be harder to hide or disappear after the job is done. They would need a vehicle to approach the house and that would be quite obvious, especially if there were few other vehicles in the district. And of course, it is harder to find the house to start with.

A built up area where a loiterer would go unnoticed due to plenty of other foot traffic would suit a burglar. Here he has a choice of numerous homes, rather than just one or two. He can walk past or drive past with no one taking any notice of him. He can linger on the sidewalk without being obvious. And if he finds that there is a dog, or the whole family is home, he can move on to look for greener pastures without losing too much time.



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A home that is surrounded by thick bushes and tall trees may be seen as easy pickings by a thief because all the shrubbery will hide him from both onlookers and occupants. If that home has a glass door, then that makes his work a great deal easier. He can simply smash a hole in the glass and unlock the door from the inside. Big windows also make it easy for the thief to break in. All these things should be taken into account when seeking to secure your home from break-ins.



What Areas Need Security?

The areas of the home that need extra security are those areas that give a burglar protection from visibility. It is important to have the front door well locked, but the back door is perhaps more important as a burglar is protected from view of any walking or driving along the street. If you have any side doors, they can often be overlooked when leaving the home and can be accidentally left unlocked. They may not even have strong locks on them.

Windows need good security; especially back windows. And if you have a window or another door into the garage and the house can be entered from there, then you need extra security for the garage. Often we go out and leave the door between the garage and house unlocked, thinking it is safe. But it is no safer than other areas, if a burglar can get into it. So be sure to provide the garage with extra security and also the door leading from it into the house.

You may think that your tiny bathroom window that is so high and hard to access would not pose a threat to home security, yet it is these very places that burglars often target. Both sliding and louver windows can have the panes removed easily to allow entrance. And a thin body can squeeze through the most amazingly small gaps.

Kitchen windows offer entrance points too. They are often at the back of the house and a burglar would have no qualms about forcing an entrance through the kitchen. So entrance points like doors and windows of your home are most in need of security. Lounge room windows are often bigger and so offer an easier alternative to the burglar if he is sure there is no one at home.

Bedroom windows also should have extra protection. Some burglars have forced their way into a bedroom and robbed the place while its occupants were in the other rooms.



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If the walls of your home are built from some material that is breakable such as fibro, then that is also a possible entrance point. It doesn't take all that much effort to smash fibro and get into a house through the wall. Skylights can be easily broken through too, so if you have one, take a good look to see how easy it is to climb up onto the roof. Nearby trees, high fences and awnings can make a burglar's task laughably easy.



The Importance of Exterior Lighting

Since burglars need secrecy to do their work, they often rely on the darkness of night to protect them from prying eyes. So when you provide exterior lighting you can foil the burglar in a way that is low-cost and effective. Nine times out of ten, a burglar will choose the house with no exterior lighting for his break-in above the one that is well lit from the outside.

With exterior lighting, a burglar can tell that you are prepared for him. He will take one look at that dazzling light and expect there to be plenty of other burglar hazards to encounter. With exterior lighting a burglar will find it difficult to see if anyone is home or not - and if the light is motion sensitive then so much the better. It will save you some running costs and give the burglar a big fright when he finds himself unexpectedly under the spotlight.

Many retail outlets rely on external lighting to keep burglars away. Many also light up the interior of their stores. If you plan on being away, it's a good idea to put lights and lamps on timers so that they can switch on and off at normal times and make it look as if the house is occupied.

External lighting can also be on a timer so that it switches on at dusk and off at dawn or slightly after. This will make it seem that the family members are at home to switch on and off, as they would do normally. To save on energy costs you can get hi-lo lighting that remains on but at a lower wattage, then when motion sensors detect movement, they come on more brightly.



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Exterior lighting can illuminate a dim and shadowy back yard to make it a place that the most daring burglar will shun. Outside lights can light up narrow alleys between city houses, back yards, front yards and patios. All are areas from where burglars would try to gain entrance into your home.

A well lit home is also comfortable to come home to. You can be sure there are no nasty surprises lingering in the shadows. Outside lighting also makes it safer for you to move around outside your home after dusk. There is less likelihood of tripping over some unforeseen obstacle such as the children's bicycles or skates that they forgot to put away.



How to Secure Entrance Doors

While it is imperative to secure your entrance doors properly, there is one thing even more important and that is to make sure those doors are of strong material to start with. They should be made of solid wood, solid wood with an outer veneer, metal or fiberglass. If they are hollow, then they are easily smashed despite the lock on them.

Hollow doors are made with a thin veneer of timber over a cardboard frame, so they can be smashed easily. They are quite suitable for internal doors, but not external. Even metal doors can be jacked up out of position unless you make sure they have a lock block on them and are reinforced inside.

External doors have a lock that is inside the door handle but this is not enough; a deadbolt lock is also needed. The deadbolt should be of high-grade steel and the throw bolt should be a minimum of one inch long - many are not. Low quality deadbolts should be replaced.

Make sure the lock on your door has a metal guard plate or protective rings on each side of the door. They should be secured with round head carriage bolts so they cannot be unscrewed. If there are free-spinning rings around the cylinder, it will stop them from being wrenched out of place with a pipe wrench. Some locks do come with these in place.

The hinges on your doors should be on the inside; otherwise the burglar will simply unscrew the door from its hinges. A secure lock will be of no use then. The door frames should also be secured with three-inch screws all along the length - they should be long enough to reach the stud.



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Pay attention to the strike plate. This is the metal plate that surrounds the hole in the doorframe that the lock bolt goes into. A flimsy plate should be replaced with a heavy-duty metal one. It needs to be screwed in with four three-inch screws.

A wide-angle peephole is also a good thing to have in your door. You'll be able to see who is there without opening up and if you get one with a cover, they won't be able to see in.

While many people favor glass doors or doors with glass panels in them, this is really asking for a burglar to break in. Glass can be easily smashed and the door then unlocked from the inside. If you must have glass doors or panels of glass near the door, cover them with a security grille on the outside and a sheet of unbreakable polycarbonate on the inside.

Sliding doors should have a lock on the top and bottom and a piece of dowel to place in the bottom track to prevent them sliding.



Tips for Securing Side Doors and Other Entry Points

It is just as important to secure side doors safely as front or back doors. In fact they may be even more important because the burglar will prefer to enter from a place not too visible from the main street. All external doors should be of solid construction, so the advice for securing entrance doors applies also to every other external door. That is, make sure the frames are solid, the hinges on the inside and the locks and steel of high quality.

If you have screen doors, make sure the gap around it is less than 4mm; otherwise it will be possible to jimmy it open. Make sure the frames are of security strength, made of steel rather than aluminum. The mesh should be of stainless steel. For patio doors a broomstick between the handles to prevent opening is a good idea.

If your windows or doors are sliding ones, have a piece of dowel cut to fit into the track at the bottom so they cannot slide unless you take it out. Also have key operated locks on both the top and bottom of the windows. For double-hung windows a piece of dowel to cut to fit the top half and propped in it will prevent the window from being lifted up. You can also drill a small hole through the frame of the lower window into the frame of the upper one and place a pin or nail in it. For a casement window or crank-out one, simply remove the crank.

Burglars like to get in and out quickly; so the more locks you have on the doors and windows the better. If they can see it's going to take them more than a few minutes to get in, they might change their minds. If they do get in through the window, but find it impossible to get out through the door because of all the locking mechanisms, then you will save all those bulky items that might otherwise have been stolen. It's very hard to lift a TV out the window, especially when it's high off the ground.



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The skylight also needs special attention. It should be covered with a steel grille and the glass should be toughened to prevent smashing. Use three-inch screws to install all locks on doors and windows. Anything smaller will not go into the studs and is much easier to get out.



What to Look for in Locks

Locks are a way of life these days. Our grandparents may not have had to use locks, but we do, so getting the best and strongest locks for your doors and windows makes sense. Some insurance policies are made void without the proper locks on your home, so be sure you get the right ones. Also, if you do have the best locks you can get, you may not have to pay as much for your insurance.

There are several different types of locks. Those that come with most doors are not usually the best ones. If your door must be opened from the outside with a key, but you don't need a key to open it from the inside, then you need extra protection. While this lock is called a safety deadlock, it is not the strongest lock you can get.

The best type of lock is one that needs a key to open it on both sides. This is called a double cylinder deadlock. This type of lock will prevent a burglar from exiting through the door with stolen goods if he climbed in through the window. If he cannot get out through the door, then he can only take small stuff with him. So your TV and other bulky items will be safe. The only thing to remember is to keep a key hidden close by in case of emergencies such as fire.

Many safety experts do not advise using a double cylinder deadlock in case of locking oneself in accidentally. Instead, a single cylinder deadbolt lock is recommended. The insert should be casehardened and the throw should be one inch long.

A rim lock is one that is installed on the inside of the door - the 'jimmy-proof' rim lock has a vertical bolt and is approved as a security device. If you have double doors (a pair of doors) in your home, then you need to have flush bolts on the top and bottom of the inactive one. The cane bolts in use on many double doors are not adequate and should be replaced. Flush bolts are much better as they cannot be



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tampered with from the outside.

Things to look for in a lock is hardened beveled steel, an anti drill feature and a captured key thumb-turn. Locks are really only as good as the timber they are attached to, so make sure all your external doors are strong ones. If you have glass within 40 cm of your lock, make sure it is reinforced or unbreakable.



Tips for Securing Garages

Many garages these days provide entrance to the home and this saves having to get out into the dark or rain to unload kids and groceries. And to have that lovely remote to open the garage door seems the ultimate in luxury and safety.

Unfortunately access to a garage also gives burglars a secure place from which to break into your home. And that remote may have thousands of look-alikes. So thieves with some of the more common remotes can cruise the neighborhood trying them out to see which garage doors will open on command. Yep, that opener code on the garage door remote is meant to be changed as soon as you get it. So many people forget to do this that thieves have had easy pickings and will continue to do so until the problem is addressed.

So the first thing to do is change the opener code; the second this to do is make sure any other doors or windows in the garage have good locks on them. This includes the door from the garage into the house. And the third thing to do is install good lighting both inside and outside the garage. Make sure that lighting can be switched on from inside the house too, and then you won't have to risk entering a darkened garage.

And one more thing is to not leave the opener in your car in full view of any car thief. You can carry it in your handbag or pocket, or at least lock it in the glove box so it cannot be seen. Or better still; get a small one that can be attached to your key chain.

For those who are forgetful about closing their garage door - either when they return home or when they leave for the day, you can buy a small automatic device that closes it automatically after a set period of time has elapsed. This is an excellent means of securing your garage and at under \$100 is quite reasonably priced when you consider the cost of a break-in.



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If you are going away for an extended period of time such as for a vacation, then it's a good idea to switch off the power to the garage door at the breaker switch. A padlock through the spring lock will also help. Extra pad bolts on the inside of ordinary garage doors and a steel grille over the window also act as burglar deterrents.



Finding the Right Security for Your Windows

It is not hard to find the right security for your windows. There are many different brands and types of locks on the market and most of them are good. If you don't like the idea of generic locks, get some especially from a locksmith. You can have your locks all keyed the same so that the same keys will open everything. This will save the hassle of remembering which key belongs where, and perhaps losing one of them.

If you like to have your windows open, consider having a grille installed over them. If you also hinge the grille and lock it, you'll have an extra means of exit in case of fire. Installing shutters are another option for added window security. Shutters are pleasing to look at and can be locked from the inside when you are away. They are also good in bad storms as they can protect your windows from getting smashed with flying debris.

If your windows are sliding ones, a piece of dowel jammed in the track will certainly prevent them from sliding open. Don't depend solely on that though; they still need to be lockable - preferably with a key.

Think of other means of security for windows as well as locks. Very prickly rose bushes or any other prickly shrub planted right outside will make things most unpleasant for any burglars. Lighting is another option, although it can be smashed easily enough. But if it is motion sensor light, they won't know it's there until it comes on. You could hook up a home security alarm system to window sensors too.

If you have an air conditioning unit installed into a window, then make sure it is bolted down securely - and the window cannot be raised - so that it cannot be pushed in, leaving a nice hole for the burglar to gain entrance.



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While replacing window glass with tempered (unbreakable) glass or polycarbonate may be expensive, it is also an option to consider. Even if you just did those windows on the ground floor, or those that seem more at risk than others such as in a sheltered position, it may help to prevent a break-in.

Windows provide a means for any burglar to look inside your house to determine if anyone is home - or to see what there is to steal - so having good blinds or drapes over your windows will help to prevent this. And of course, never leave broken or cracked windows unattended, as this will make any burglar think the house is vacant and easy pickings.



Tips for Fencing Your Property

Many properties are fenced for various reasons. Sometimes we just want to define what is ours, other times we need to keep the neighborhood kids and pets off our lawn. And sometimes the fencing will be for security reasons. But before you arrange to get your property fenced, be sure you comply with all rules and regulations in your county.

Many homes have six-foot fences of solid construction like brick or stone and you might at first think that is a wonderful security measure. But if you look at it through the eyes of a burglar, once he climbs over it will also give him a great deal of privacy to break into your home.

The best type of fence for security then, is one that is high, strong and allows a good view in. That way, any burglar will not be able to break in unseen by neighbors or whoever happens to be near enough.

Wrought iron fits both these criteria and is also visually attractive. On the downside, it is quite expensive. Chain link fencing is not quite so pretty to look at, but is certainly strong enough to keep a burglar out. It is up to you to decide what you can live with and what your budget will stand.

In any case, if you are fencing only for burglars, then be sure you remove all trees from the outside and the inside of the boundary, otherwise your burglar will certainly climb over and sneak around the back to break in where he can't be seen.



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If you do install a chain-link or wrought iron fence for security, don't forget that your gate must also be just as secure. Choose a gate that cannot be lifted off its hinges as many gates can. The hinges need to be on the inside of the fence; just as your external door hinges should be on the inside of the house. Fix them to the post in a way that cannot be tampered with. In fact, you could counter-sink the screws or bolts and cover them with a steel plate, just to make it a bit harder for any burglar to get them out.

The post for the gate must be of extra strength - much stronger than the fence posts, as they will have to take the weight and movement of the gates. The locks for the gates are also important. A heavy chain with steel padlock is one option.



What Type of Alarm System Should You Use?

The type of home security alarm system you should use depends to a great extent on the type of home you have, where it is located and your personal needs and lifestyle. If your home is built of double brick, then a cabled alarm system will be impossible to install. That is, the cables cannot be put in between the walls without doing them a great deal of damage. So if you go for cables, they will be out where they are visible and can even be cut by a burglar.

If you are still building or about to build, then it's time to install the cabled alarm system right now. Apart from those installation problems, a cable system is very trustworthy. The wireless system is also a good one, but you may also run into problems with it, due to the location of your home. If there are high-tension power cables close by these can interfere with the signal. So can solid brick walls.

Wireless alarm systems depend on movement sensors, using a passive laser or microwave beam to set off the alarm when interrupted or blocked. If you have pets or are troubled with vermin like mice or lizards in your house, these can also set off the signal. But you can get the type of alarm that distinguishes a small animal from a human. A house that is heritage listed will need to have a wireless alarm system, as any installation of cables will not be allowed. In any case, if you are retrofitting the system, a wireless alarm will be much easier to install and cost less. Many alarm systems use a combination of the two types; beam and cables.

Sirens and strobe lights will certainly alert the neighbors to a break-in. Some sirens are external and by law have a limited time for blasting their noise over the neighboring homes, while internal sirens are designed to force any burglar to leave the premises or risk losing his hearing and sanity. Some alarms are silent as far as the home goes, but alert a monitoring company who will then send a patrol car to the



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home. In some cases, it can be the police who come to the home, rather than a monitoring company.

You can also have a reed switch that is affected when the window it is attached to is opened. There are detectors that are configured to sound the alarm when glass breaks. The panic or duress button type of alarm must be activated by pressing - this is not a good option in case you are physically prevented from activating it.

You can have an alarm system that links to a control pad. You then activate or deactivate it by tapping in a PIN. Remembering to do it could be a problem for some. There is also the closed circuit television with intercom and automatic lock control.



Hidden Dangers Inside the Home

There are many hidden dangers inside the home, especially where little children or seniors are concerned. Electric heaters can easily cause fires if left on close to fabrics such as curtains or clothing that can catch fire. Toddlers or older people may trip over them - or the cords leading to them - and do themselves an injury.

The type of furniture that you assemble yourself is often much lighter than pre-assembled furniture and it can easily wobble and fall over along with whatever is on top of it. Books can cause bruising if they tumble onto a little one. Tall, narrow shapes are the worst for stability.

Placing of furniture is another important factor. If you have your sofa under window as many people do, that encourages little children to climb up on the back of it to see out. They can easily fall through the window or fall back off the sofa onto the floor. A sofa close to other furniture often encourages a mischievous toddler to use it as a step up to climb onto something that is dangerous.

Cupboards can be a source of danger if they hold medicines, flammable substances or poisons where children can reach them. Glassware and other breakables should be kept on high shelves. A small pad bolt out of reach will ensure everything in the cupboard is safe from exploring fingers.

Floor rugs and mats are another source of danger. They can slip under the feet, or the edges and corners can be kicked up and tripped over. Mats should never be placed on stairs or steps. Carpet that is worn and kicked up can cause anyone to trip over.

Likewise, slippery tiles on the patio or in the bathroom can cause nasty falls, especially when wet. Paths that are on the damp side of the house can grow moss that becomes very slippery, too.



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Children sometimes get caught up in dangling cords from blinds or curtains. In some cases they have actually hanged themselves. Cots should be placed well away from windows that have cords dangling. Cords should be tied up high so toddlers cannot access them.

Low furniture such as coffee tables must also be inspected to make sure the corners are not sharply pointed. Most furniture does have the corners slightly rounded, but some does not. If you use tablecloths, find some that are the exact size of your table top so that the children won't be tempted to pull on them and upend your hot coffee over their faces.

Finally, never leave young children alone in the bath. Water makes things slippery and they can easily fall and drown, or turn on the hot tap and scald themselves.



Facts About Smoke Detectors

There are two types of fires and both are potentially deadly. One is the slow, smoldering smoky fire that causes death by smoke inhalation rather than burning. You may not even wake up with this type of fire. The other is the fast-moving fiery inferno that can trap you more quickly than you know and destroy a home in just a few minutes.

The two types of smoke alarms have been designed especially for each type of fire. The photoelectric alarm is the one that quickly senses smoke from a smoldering fire - much more quickly than the ionization alarm would do. But the ionization alarm senses heat far more quickly than the photoelectric alarm does. So which should we buy?

Since no one can tell what sort of fire is likely to occur in their home, it is a wise decision to choose both types. But if you think that is rather annoying or confusing, then go for the dual smoke alarm that has both components in it.

Smoke detectors can be wired into the homes electric system. If you think this could pose a problem if the fire melts the wires and causes a short before the alarm goes off, then you are right. That is why these alarms also have battery back up. But batteries can also get old and run out of power (rather like humans!) and need to be replaced.

It's a great idea to replace your smoke alarm batteries at the same time as you change your clocks from daylight saving. Once you get into this habit, you'll find that there is no problem with forgetting to do it, or wondering if the batteries are still working.

You can test your smoke alarms monthly by holding a lit candle up close to them. But not too close! You don't want to melt them. Once the alarm goes off, you can have a



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peaceful mind knowing that they are on guard where fires are concerned. Many alarms have a hush button so you can turn them off if they sound when the toast burns or steam from the shower escapes.

Smoke alarms should be installed in every room, especially in bedrooms, so that a heavy sleeper can be alerted to fire. If you keep your bedroom doors closed at night, then install one just outside the doors. Hard-wired alarms will need the services of a qualified electrician to install, but battery powered can be installed by anyone with a screwdriver. You can even get stick-on alarms if you are not handy with tools.



What to Know About Fire Extinguishers

Since fires spring from several different sources, fire extinguishers are designed to control various types. Some contain water while others contain gas of various kinds. If you need to use a fire extinguisher to put out a fire, you must determine first what has caused the fire and look at the label on the fire extinguisher to make sure it is suitable for that type of fire.

There are basically four different types of fire extinguishers. The Class A fire extinguisher is for putting out fires that have been started in combustible items such as wood and paper. It contains water and compressed gas. Never use a Class A for any other type of fire such as an electrical or gas fire. These extinguishers are identified by the green triangle holding a black A.

For a fire caused by flammable liquids such as grease, oil or gasoline, you should use a Type B fire extinguisher. Many kitchen fires are started by something such as oil boiling over on the stove and catching fire. Type B should be used, never Type A as water simply causes the oil - and hence the fire - to spread further. Type B extinguishers have a number on them that tells how many square feet of fire the contents of that extinguisher can put out when used by a non-trained person. The Red square with the black B is easily seen.

A Class C extinguisher is especially for fires caused by electricity. It has special chemicals in it that are non-conductive to electricity. A blue circle with a black C makes it easy to identify Class C extinguishers.

Class D is specifically for flammable metals; the type of metal is specified on the container. They can be easily distinguished from the others by a bright yellow star with a black D on it.

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Some extinguishers are generic and are suitable for more than one category of fire. In this case they will have two or three symbols on them. Note that the symbols described above are on older extinguishers. New pictorial labels are now used, with a diagonal line to denote those for which it is not suitable.

Extinguishers that are effective in putting out class B and C fires mostly contain carbon dioxide. The spray should be kept down at the base of the fire and used within three to eight feet. Keep hosing the fire even after it seems to be out in case it re-ignites.



How to Avoid Electrical Dangers

Electricity is a wonderful tool when used properly and respected, but can be lethal if not. These days the demand for power in the home is much higher than it was in years gone by - when the first fuse boxes were installed. So if your fuse box is an old one, consider getting it upgraded to prevent meltdown and possible fire. Older homes may not have enough circuits installed for safety either.

If you find that fuses are blowing or appliances cutting out, then get an electrician to inspect your wiring system pronto. Old breaker panels may need replacing. Many older panels are just not sensitive enough to trip the switch when the need occurs and this can cause fires. One particular brand, the Federal Pacific Electric Company (FPE) is one that definitely needs replacement.

Old wiring in homes - and wiring damaged by vermin - can easily cause fires, so get your whole electrical system checked over by a licensed electrician to prevent any problems. Never allow an untrained person to do installations that need a licensed professional.

Never go to sleep with a space heater on. Keep heaters away from clothing and curtains, and while it is tempting to dry those few clothes in front of the heater, remember that they will pose a fire hazard too. It is far safer to allow them to dry more slowly away from the heater or put them in the clothes dryer. Speaking of clothes dryers, make sure the lint filter is cleaned regularly.

Electrical cables should not be placed under carpets where damage and wear will go unnoticed. Likewise, overloading power boards and double adaptors can damage the switch, causing a fire to start.



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One of the more modern inventions is a plug-in air freshener. It has been responsible for many fires because the thin plastic it is made of overheats and melts. If you must have an air-freshener at work in your home, use one that is not plugged into a power point. Or try a bunch of flowers.

Power surges can cause fires too - and harm your electrical equipment. When there is a power failure, there can often be a power surge when it is restored, so switching off all appliances when the power goes off is a good idea. Wait until you are sure it is properly restored before switching them on again.

Appliances should also be switched off at the wall and the plugs removed each night before you go to bed. When pulling the plug out, don't hold it by the cord, but grasp the hard plastic part. Choose appliances that have a finger grip on the plugs to make it easier.



How to Prevent Accidents in the Home

Many accidents in the home are caused by haste or carelessness. When young children are involved the cause is often through lack of supervision. Then there are the times when we knowingly do things that are not safe - like climbing on a rickety chair to change the light bulb. However, using a bit of common sense can usually prevent most accidents and injuries.

Most people know that having an electric or gas heater too close to curtains or clothing is asking for trouble. But sometimes we don't think about where the cord is in relation to traffic areas. If anyone is likely to take a shortcut and step over that cord, then move the heater to another location, even if it isn't as convenient a position.

Making sure that maintenance chores are done promptly is another way of preventing accidents. The frayed carpet that could trip anyone up needs mending. Old wiring needs checking and replacing. Chipped crockery needs to see the inside of the bin. Replace batteries in smoke-alarms regularly. Furnaces and chimneys should be checked every year.

Family training for what to do in emergencies and accidents can minimize injury. Decide on the correct exit in case of fires and have the children practice getting down on their knees and crawling out that way. Learn CPR in case of drowning accidents. All the family should know simple first-aid for cuts and the signs of possible strokes. Emergency numbers need to be learned or left where they are easily visible.

Preventing non-electrical accidents is mostly a matter of common sense, too. You can use non-skid mats for the shower or bath and install a grab bar nearby. Loose mats and floor rugs should be thrown out, or have rubber corners fitted. If you have a pair of shoes or slippers with slippery soles, throw them out. Better waste a pair of shoes than risk a broken limb. Use window guards if there are children in the house.



HOW TO PROTECT YOUR HOME AND FAMILY

If your house has stairs, make sure they are kept free of clutter and the handrails are secure.

Curious or mischievous children getting into cupboards while mother is busy elsewhere can cause accidents. Any product from cleaners to medications that could make a child ill or prove toxic should be kept on the highest shelf. Cupboards should be locked if possible.

If you have a pool, then everyone in the family should learn CPR. Teach the children to never swim alone and see that they practice water and poolside safety e.g. not running on wet areas.