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CRIME PREVENTION BULLETIN

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Spring Brings with it Extra Home Security Tips

When you start your spring cleaning and tidying up the yard, take time to make sure your house is protected and secure against possible springtime burglaries. Taylor Police offer these tips to make your property more secure.

- Use an on/off timer on a living room lamp if away.
- Leave a radio on when leaving home, even for a bit.
- Always close and lock garage doors and windows.
- Store automatic garage door openers out of sight.
- Lock away all ladders and tools a burglar could use.
- Light all entrances and consider “vandal-proof” fixtures.
- Keep the lawn maintained, showing an occupied home.
- Keep your mailbox empty.
- Do not place valuables near windows with open drapes.
- Keep extra keys in a safe place; never hide one outside.
- Never leave a note on the door saying you are away.
- Never leave doors or windows unlocked when away.
- Only put your last name on your nameplate or mailbox.
- Know your neighbors and watch out for each other.
- Keep landscaping trimmed near doors and windows to avoid hiding spots for prowlers.
- Be alert for unusual activities. If you see someone unfamiliar loitering around a neighbor’s yard, check their identity with your neighbor by phone or call Taylor Police.
- Install a wide-angle door viewer if visibility of visitors is impossible. Do not open the door with a door chain, they can break through it.
- When returning home, be mindful of anything unusual with your residence. If you suspect a break-in, **do not enter**—call Taylor Police.
- As a test, pretend you are the burglar...go outside and plan how to get in to see where you need to install locks on all doors and windows. Some things to look for are the following:



Lighting

- Good lighting is one of the best deterrents to crime.
- Indoor lighting gives the impression that a home is occupied.
- If you’re going away, use an automatic timer to turn interior lights on/off at normal times.
- Outdoor lighting can eliminate hiding places. Install lighting near porches, all doorways, garage doors, and other points of entry.
- Place lights out of reach from the ground so the light bulbs cannot be removed or broken by a prowler.
- Aim some lights away from the house so you can see if anyone is approaching at night.
- Install motion-sensing lights that turn on automatically as someone enters your property.

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Spring Brings With It Extra Home Security Tips

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Locks

- A deadbolt lock can provide good protection. Make sure the bolt extends at least one inch from the edge of the door and that the connecting screws holding the lock are on the inside of the door.
- Ensure the strike plate is attached to the doorframe with screws that measure at least three inches.
- Use a cylinder that has a steel guard—a ring around the key section. The guard should rotate around the key to prevent wrenching if twisted.
- Double-Cylinder Deadbolt Locks: Are prohibited by the State of Michigan Residential Building Code for safety reasons.
- Padlocks: Use padlocks for sheds, garages, etc. It must have a 3/8-inch shackle and be able to resist bolt cutters.

Landscaping

- Landscaping should allow optimal visibility to and from the house.
- Trim shrubs that could conceal prowlers near doors and windows.
- Light areas of dense shrubs/trees that could be hiding places.
- Cut back tree limbs that could help thieves climb into windows.
- Keep fencing low enough to avoid giving criminals a place to hide.



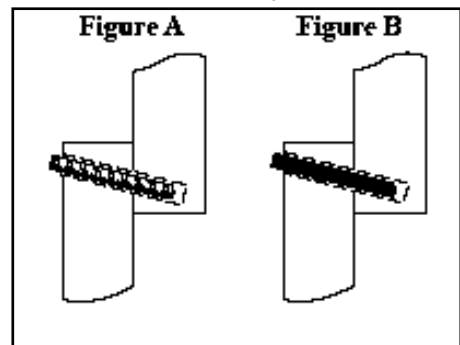
Doors

- Exterior doors should be metal or solid wood.
- Use strong door hinges on the inside of the door, with non-removable pins.
- Every entry door should be well lighted and have a wide-angle door viewer.
- Sliding glass doors can be an easy way into your home for criminals.
- Install keyed locking devices that secure the door to the frame.
- Adjust track clearances on doors so they cannot be pushed from the tracks or put a piece of wood or a metal bar in the track of the closed door to prevent opening if the lock is jimmied or removed.
- Drill a hole and insert a nail or eye bolt through the inside frame and partially into

the metal door frames. You can pull the nail—the burglar cannot.

Windows

- Most double-hung windows have thumb-turn locks between the two panels. Do not rely on these—they can be pried open or easily reached through a broken pane. Install locking devices to keep windows from being raised from outside.
- An easy, inexpensive way to secure your windows is to use the “pin” trick.



- Drill an angled hole through the top frame of the lower window partially into the frame of the upper window (Figure A).
- Then insert a nail or eyebolt. The window cannot be opened until you remove the nail (Figure B).
- Make a second set of holes with the windows partially opened so you can have ventilation without intruders.

Taylor Police Department Offers Residential Security Surveys

The Taylor Police Department has compiled and offers to residents a 4-page residential security survey that homeowners can use to better secure their properties. The survey is a simple checklist that allows homeowners to tour their home and yard and look for weaknesses in doors, windows, lighting, locks and other anti-crime measures.

The surveys are available at the Taylor Police Department and on the police department website at www.cityoftaylor.com/police.

How to Avoid Home Improvement Frauds

Because home repairs and improvements are expensive projects, con men and vagabond thieves have entered the industry to rip you off. Be careful if somebody mails you a brochure offering to do an expensive job for an unusually low price. This is a favorite trick of dishonest home repair firms. Once you sign the contract, you learn why the price is so low—the firm never delivers the service you paid for in advance.

Free inspections by con men turn up plenty of expensive repairs you don't need. Some vagabond thieves may not even mail you an offer to do a free inspection. They just show up at your home and try to gain access by posing as utility repairmen or home insulation inspectors offering a free inspection, etc. They may quickly flash something that looks like an identification card to convince you to let them enter. Some shady operators offer to do the work on the spot. However, when they leave, you may be left with a large bill and a faulty repair job.

Precautions you can take to make an informed decision include:

- Always get several estimates for each repair job and compare prices and terms. Ask if there is an estimate fee before agreeing to let the repair person or company inspect your home.
- Make sure you know your salesperson's

name and the name and address of the company he or she represents.

- Check with the city's Building Department on a company to see if they have gotten complaints in the past.
- Ask the firm for references, and check them out. Inspect the finished product. Contact your local Better business bureau to check out the company's reputation before you authorize any work or pay any money.
- If you decide to sign a contract, make sure a completion date is specified and that you know what the job will cost, if work will be subcontracted, if a bond will be posted to protect you against liens on your home, if the contract includes all oral promises made, and if materials to be used are described in detail.
- Make sure the company is licensed and insured.
- Always pay for home improvement work with a check or money order, **never with cash!** You may wish to make installment payments at the beginning of a job, when the work is almost complete, and after the job is finished.
- Many reputable companies do not require payment until work is completed.
- You can call the City of Taylor Building Department at (734) 374-1515 to inquire about a potential contractor.



Keeping Your Yard and Other Outdoor Equipment Secure

- If you are working in the front yard, lock the back door and garage. If you are working in the back yard, lock the front door and garage.
- Consider chain link or picket-type fencing so neighbors can see each other's yards.
- Keep lawn mowers and other equipment in a locked garage or shed.
- Engrave your license number on your lawn mower and other equipment.
- Do not keep gas cans in or near the house.
- Let engines cool before refueling or putting them away.
- Always shut lawn mowers off before trying to clean or unclog them.
- Watch out for children when using lawn equipment and never leave running equipment unattended.
- When refilling gas cans place them on the ground. **DO NOT** leave them in the trunk of the car or the back of the truck.
- Remove any oily-greasy rags from your home after use.
- Bicycles are often stolen from yards.
- Lock your bike to a stationary object with a hardened steel U-shaped lock.
- Avoid locks, chains or cable that can easily be cut or broken.
- Make sure both wheels are locked and remove any accessories that can be taken.
- Engrave the bike with a driver's license number in an inconspicuous spot.

“Always gets several estimates for every repair job and compare prices and terms...and never pay with cash.”



Contact:

Taylor Police Department
23515 Goddard Road
Taylor, MI 48180

Phone:
(734) 287-6611

Emergency:
9-1-1

Administration:
(734) 374-1444

Investigative Services:
(734) 374-1420

Traffic Division:
(734) 374-1365

Tipline:
(734) 374-8737

Fax:
(734) 374-1481

E-mail:
Taylor_PD@ci.taylor.mi.us

Website:
www.cityoftaylor.com

Spring is time to check
your smoke detector!

For more Information Contact:

Detective Sgt. Mary Scلابassi
Investigative Services
(734) 374-1531

Protecting Your Family During Storm Season

All thunderstorms are dangerous and can produce lightning. In the U.S., an average of 300 people are injured and 80 people are killed each year by lightning. Though most lightning victims survive, people struck by lightning often report long-term, debilitating symptoms.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) offers these guidelines during storm season:

- Remember the 30/30 lightning safety rule: Go indoors if, after seeing lightning, you cannot count to 30 before hearing thunder. Stay inside for 30 minutes after hearing the last clasp of thunder.
- If a storm is likely in your area, postpone outdoor activities.
- Get inside a home, building, or hard top automobile. Although you may be injured if lightning strikes your car, you are much safer inside a vehicle than outside.
- Rubber-soled shoes and tires offer NO protection from lightning. But, the steel frame of a hard-topped car provides increased protection if you're not touching metal.
- Secure outdoor objects that could blow away or cause damage.
- Secure doors and close window blinds and shades.
- Avoid showering or bathing. Plumbing fixtures can conduct electricity.
- Use a corded telephone only in emergency. Cordless and cell phones are safe for use.
- Unplug appliances and other electronics and turn off air conditioners. Power surges from lightning can cause serious damage.
- Avoid being near a tall isolated tree in an open area.
- Avoid hilltops, open fields, the beach, a boat on the water, isolated sheds, any thing metal i.e. tractors, farm equipment, bikes golf carts, and golf clubs.
- In a wooded area, seek shelter in a low area under a thick area of trees.
- In an open area, go to a low place.
- On open water, get to land and find shelter immediately.
- Anywhere you feel your hair stand on end (which indicates lightning is about to strike), squat low to the ground on the balls of

your feet. Place your hands over your ears and your head between your knees. Make yourself the smallest target possible and minimize your contact to the ground. DO NOT lie flat on the ground.

During a Tornado:

- Look for approaching storms, dark, greenish sky, large hail, a large, dark, low-lying cloud, or a loud train-like roar.
- If indoors, go to a designated safe room, basement, storm cellar or lowest building level. If no basement, go to the center of an interior room on the lowest level away from windows, doors and outside walls. Put as many walls as possible between you and the outside. Get under a sturdy table and use your arms to protect your head and neck.
- If in a vehicle or mobile home, get out and go to the lowest floor of a sturdy, nearby building.
- Mobile homes, even if tied down, offer little protection from tornadoes.
- If outside with no shelter, lie flat in a nearby ditch and cover your head. Do not go under a bridge or overpass. You are safer in a low, flat location.
- Never try to outrun a tornado in urban or congested areas in a car or truck. Instead, leave the vehicle immediately for safe shelter.
- Watch out for flying debris. Flying debris from tornadoes cause most fatalities and injuries.
- After any storm or emergency, care for anyone who is injured and if able to do so, call 9-1-1.
- **For more information on emergency preparedness go to www.fema.gov.**



Information for this newsletter was obtained from the American Crime Prevention Institute, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as well as the National Sheriff's Association.