

Burglary is a property crime; however it can feel very personal to those who have been victims. The thought that a stranger was inside their home is very unnerving for anyone who has suffered a burglary. In 2021, the Benton County Sheriff's Office investigated 36 burglaries. As one of the top 5 most reported crimes in the county, it is worth taking some time to implement prevention strategies to reduce your chances of being a victim.

Avoid giving burglars a reason to target your residence. Typically, burglars select their victims somewhat randomly. A particular home or neighborhood may be targeted because the home appears nice from the street or the neighborhood is a more affluent area. However, some people become specifically selected victims through the sharing of too much information. The fact that someone keeps large amounts of cash at their residence or has a large collection of valuable property can become common knowledge all too quickly. If you do have valuables in your home that are out of the ordinary, consider carefully the people with whom you will entrust this information.

Strong doors and locks can turn away burglars. When you are selecting a door and lockset, especially for doors that are out of the public eye, consider how hard it would be to break through the door. Those glass panes may look beautiful, but they are easily broken. The door may look its best with only a handle and passage lock, however a stout deadbolt installed into a solid frame will be much more difficult to force open. Always secure your doors when you leave, especially doors to the backyard or the service door into an attached garage. Burglars are very fond of gaining access into an attached garage, as this provides easy entry into the home out of the sight of witnesses.

Technology can be useful in turning away a burglar. Old school solutions like motion lights and light timers can be useful in making your home unappealing to burglars. Security systems, especially those that tie to a smart phone, are also a very useful tool in repelling burglars. While any security system is going to require an investment, the prices of these systems are becoming more competitive, and many options no longer require a regular payment for monitoring.

Watching for and reporting suspicious activity is key to reducing burglaries. Involved and watchful neighbors are a great asset in a neighborhood. We truly appreciate when neighbors trust their instincts and report suspicious activity to us. Of particular concern is individuals who come to your door unexpectedly. Often burglars will knock on the door to a home prior to breaking in to see if anyone is there. If someone answers the door, they generally have a made-up story for why they have knocked. We appreciate when people alert us to these individuals and provide us with descriptions or license plate numbers.

Everyone deserves to feel safe in their homes. Use these strategies to keep burglars at bay and hold onto that feeling of being safe at home. For more crime prevention information and safety information visit the Benton County Sheriff's Office website at: <https://www.co.benton.mn.us/211/Crime-Prevention>. You can also like and follow us on Facebook and Twitter at @BentonMNSheriff for regular updates and crime prevention messages.