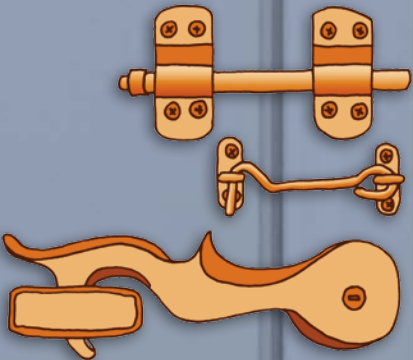




Pull out all the stops!

7 tips how to protect your home against burglars

Your Police and the Swiss Crime Prevention – an office of the ministries of justice and police of the Cantons.



Editor

Swiss Crime Prevention (SCP)
House of Cantons
Speichergasse 6, Postfach, CH-3000 Bern 7
Responsible: Martin Boess
E-Mail: info@skppsc.ch, www.skppsc.ch

The brochure is available from every police office nationwide as well as from the police of the Principality of Liechtenstein.

It is edited in English (online only), German, French and Italian. Downloads are available from www.skppsc.ch.

Text and compilation

Swiss Crime Prevention (SCP) in collaboration with the special commission of SCP and Weber & Partner, Berne

Layout and illustration

Weber & Partner, Berne, www.weberundpartner.com

Copyright

Swiss Crime Prevention (SCP)
April 2014, 1st edition

Pull out all the stops!

7 tips how to protect your home against burglars

Introduction	4
1 Lock the door!	6
2 Lock the windows!	8
3 Protect valuables!	10
4 Keep your eyes open!	11
5 Turn on the lights!	13
6 Arm your alarm!	14
7 Invite the experts!	15
What to do after a burglary was committed?	17
Contact addresses of the police forces	18

Dear reader

Locking the door when leaving the house obviously goes without saying. Only: What kind of door is that? Is it made from steel or plywood? Or even partly of glass? If yes, what kind of glass? And how is it anchored? What about the lock? And what about the terrace door? And the caller door? Are all windows bolted, even the ones on the upper floor? Do you have an air shaft grate? How is it secured?

If you cannot answer all of these questions easily, then you should carry on reading. Do you think that burglars only come in the dead of the night and only to rich people? Wrong! **The majority of all burglaries in apartments is committed during the day**, across all areas, and often already in the morning. Why? Because at this time most of the people are not at home but at work, shopping or just somewhere else. With burglaries in offices it is the other way round: they are mainly committed at night, because at that time most people are back in their apartments. Or at least not in the office or shop.

What do we learn from it? **In general burglars don't want to be seen. And they don't want to encounter anyone.** In most cases burglars are not violent criminals. They don't want to hurt anyone and don't want to be hurt themselves. For this reason they dread noise, effort, complications and – in the dark – the light. All must happen as quick, as quiet and as inconspicuous as possible.



Most burglaries in apartments and private houses are committed during the day or early in the evening.

This is the reason why the majority of burglaries is not committed with blowpipe and glass cutter like in the movies, but with simple lever tools that fit into every pocket, like for instance a **screwdriver**.

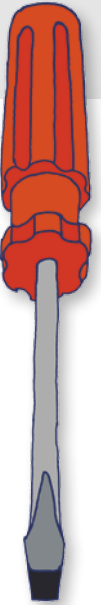
And exactly here you should pull out the stops: if you eliminate all weak spots where for instance a screwdriver could work as a housebreaking tool, then you have already significantly reduced the risk of burglary! Of course, you can go further; there are various options to increase security.

We all know: there is no one hundred percent security in life. Therefore you should consider when your personal need for security is satisfied, i.e. which preventive measures seem **reasonable and economically justifiable** in your case. Together with independent experts you should **define your individual safety objective**.

There are reliable prevention standards and resistance classes, which you should observe for structural new acquisitions and/or upgrades (e.g. doors and windows); also in this case ask experts for advice. Unfortunately, there are no certifications for companies installing such standard building elements: what is the use of the strongest certified door lock if it is not professionally installed? In searching for the right installation expert still **personal experience and trust** in the respective skills count.



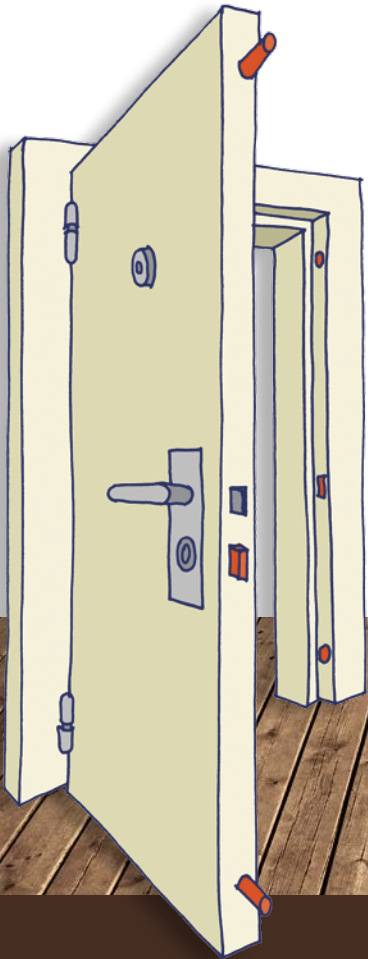
Most burglaries in business premises are committed at night.



1

Lock the door!

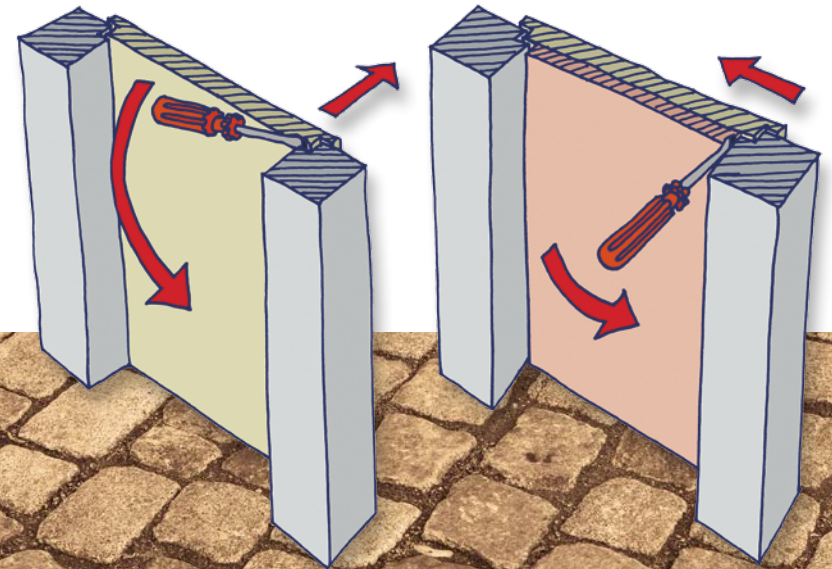
Simple tools (such as screwdrivers) are often used by burglars as **levers**. Normally doors without additional protection can easily be pried open. However, door manufacturers have responded and today offer a variety of doors, which are certified to be burglary-resistant, and in addition meet all esthetic requirements! Here with **multi-point locking systems** (see drawing left) prying is met with multiple resistance and in this way the obstruction of burglaries is significantly increased. In most cases even



Multi-point locking systems significantly increase the safety of a door.

an old door can be easily retrofitted with additional locks – but how to do this best should be checked by an expert on site. An **additional layer** for the front door (see drawing below) can also be an effective, although rather elaborate measure.

It is also very important that all **closing leaves** are properly secured and anchored, since only in this way they form a functional unit with all additional locking devices. To prevent breaking off and unscrewing lock cylinders these must be protected with **protective plates**, which are secured from the inside.



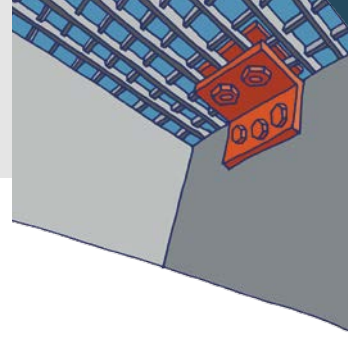
If the outside of a door is strengthened with an additional board, then the lever can no longer be applied between the door and inside of the frame (drawing left), but only – totally ineffective – between the frame and the board (drawing right).

2 Lock the windows!

Generally for windows applies the same as for doors: they are mostly pushed and pried open by burglars at their weak points; for this reason they should be secured with special locking mechanisms, so-called **mushroom pins** (see drawing below). They are integrated in the circular fittings and can be easily and comfortably locked via the window handle. Older windows can be retrofitted for instance with **locking rods**, which are secured on the window frame.

Every window handle must be lockable! According to the latest research window panes don't have to be made of laminated safety glass or covered with a special film: even if the window is broken the lockable handle prevents that it can be opened from the inside.

Roller and folding blinds offer additional protection but cannot replace the above-mentioned burglary resistance.

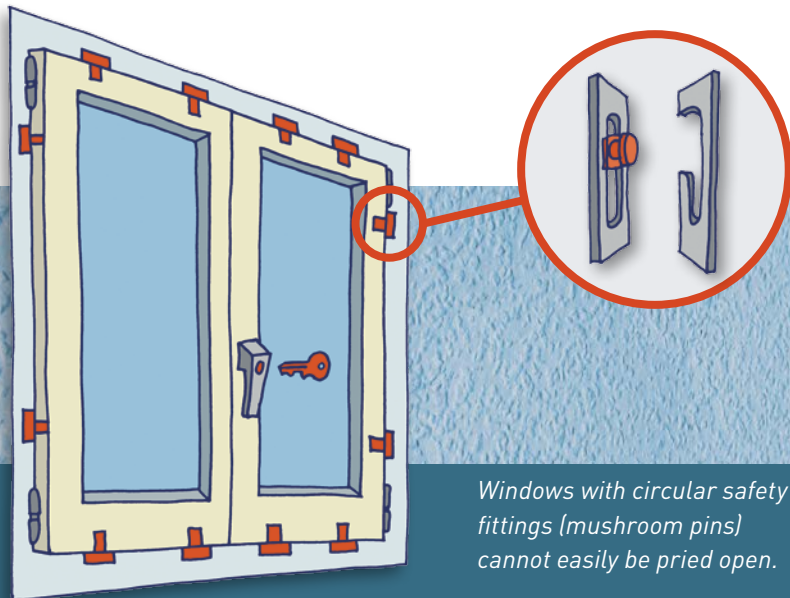


Air shaft grates must be properly secured.

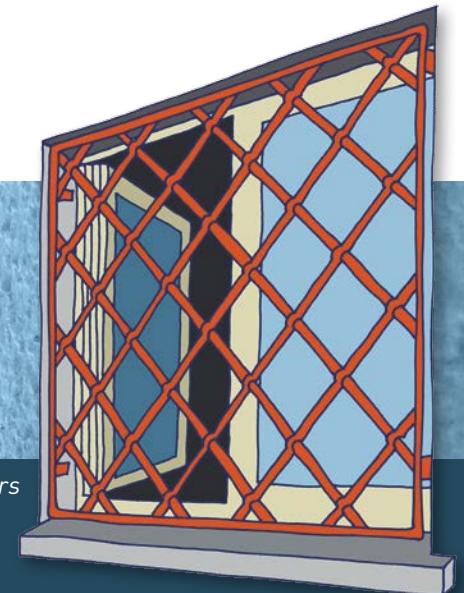
Burglar bars protect windows, which cannot be designed burglary-resistant, for instance because there are increased ventilation requirements and the window must be open at all times. Burglar bars must be anchored in the brickwork and secured with non-detachable special screws. Also here an expert should be asked for advice, so that the bars are sufficiently strong and the gap between the vertical bars is not too big. Additional welded **crossbars** prevent the bars from being bent apart.

Air shaft grates must be properly secured (top drawing). Windows with a properly secured air shaft grate do not need additional security and can be left open.

Always consider: a burglar can open tilted windows with a bit of dexterity and without the use of force: **tilted windows are considered open windows** – also actuarially, which could lead to a reduced claim settlement!



Windows with circular safety fittings (mushroom pins) cannot easily be pried open.



Welded crossbars on burglar bars prevent bending the bars apart.

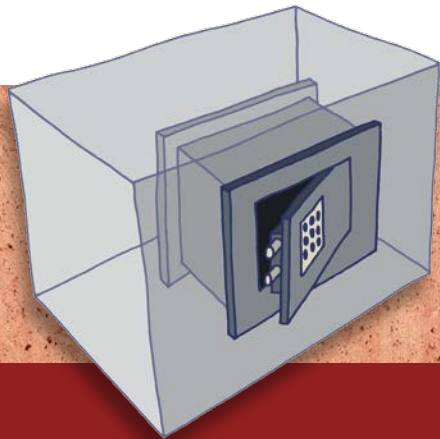
3

Protect valuables!

Your most valuable property should be in a **safe!** This includes jewelry, watches, gold coins, securities, stocks and bonds, etc. Contrary to a portable jewelry case this safe must be **anchored in or at the masonry**, so that it cannot be simply taken away and opened somewhere else without time pressure. For valuables that you only need infrequently, such as for special occasions, or that you really never touch, safe-keeping **outside** your house, for instance in a **safe deposit box**, may be advisable.

Observe the different protection ratings when buying a safe. Contact your insurance company upfront to find out, which one is right for you – also with regard to efficient **insurance cover**.

Decide definitely for a **combination lock**, since for key locks a burglar will always assume that there is a spare key somewhere hidden in the house. He will search for it and mess up your entire apartment; and in many cases even find it!



A safe should have a combination lock and be anchored in the masonry.

4

Keep your eyes open!

Not high-tech, but still indispensable if you have no video camera at the front door: the good old **spyhole**. If somebody is at your door that you don't expect or know, then you don't have to open the door in the first place. But for this person not thinking that nobody is at home, and possibly starting to break in, you should make clear to him via the intercom or through the window that you are not interested in the visit.

With **video surveillance** you have all other areas of your property under control, but either you are at home at the crucial moment in any case, see the burglar and call the police, or you are not at home and your video system only **records** a burglary, which you could not prevent. A **dummy camera** can't even do that, so it **cannot be recommended**.

One of the most efficient obstacles against burglars is a **well-functioning neighborhood**. From time to time feeding the neighbor's cat at the weekend or watering his plants when he is absent, should be self-evident and ensures a trusting relationship.



"But that's not uncle Peter!"

5

Turn on the lights!

The less neighbors seal themselves off from each other and the more they trust each other, the higher will be the willingness to have a watchful eye on the property next door. Just consider that the beautiful high hedge, which protects you sunbathing in summer, also protects a burglar when prying open your terrace door...

It is better to keep each other in the neighborhood actively informed, for instance with regard to **vacations** – but it would be no good idea to publish this on a social network on the Internet... even burglars make use of the new media! In any case, if you are absent for a longer period of time, someone should take care of your mail; an overflowing mailbox is like an open invitation for burglars.

Although most burglaries are committed during the day, the role of lighting in obstruction of burglaries should not be underestimated. A house that stays completely dark in the evening, maybe several evenings in a row, sends the signal to the burglar that it is currently not inhabited. Therefore **timers** to automatically and irregularly light up some of the rooms of your house are a sensible measure. So not already from far can be seen that you are away (see drawing below).

Motion detectors that switch on bright **shock lighting** on all sides of the house as soon as someone enters the premises also serve deterrence. Even if the burglar just quickly wants to come closer to spy out if you are on vacation.

Consider that your evening and morning lifestyle habits can be read from internal lighting; consider that a **burglar could watch you**; so use your curtains, window and roller blinds.



"Could you water my flowers next week? I will be on holiday."



Who is not at home?

Alarm systems can be a further effective addition to your burglar proofing, but they are not always necessary. Alarm systems detect and report when unauthorized persons enter the premises. However, for their flawless functioning lots of skills and experience are needed. A **security concept** captures the exact processes within the premises to exclude all factors, which could lead to a **false alarm**, such as the movement of pets. False alarms with police deployment can lead to charges!

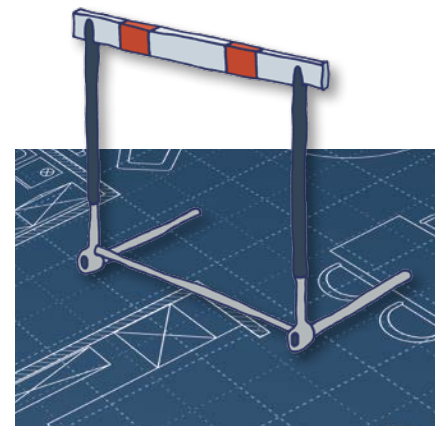
In theory you can install a contact on every door and every window and you can equip your entire home and premises with motion detectors – however, the most important question is what has to happen after the alarm has been triggered. And where must it be triggered? Is it a silent alarm that is transmitted to an **emergency call center**, with the burglar not being aware of it until the police are deployed? Or is it a deafening local alarm, waking up the entire residential neighborhood – everyone is stressed out but nobody responds? When installing an alarm system you need an **intervention strategy**. Best be advised by an expert.



For installing an alarm system you need a security concept!

We have seen that there is a kind of “**3-pillar principle**” of burglar-resistant measures. These three pillars are: **1. Behavioral patterns and organizational measures.** This includes for instance not leaving keys in the locks, keeping all windows closed and the neighborhood watching out for each other. **2. Structural-mechanical measures.** This includes, among other things, all your additional locks and locking mechanisms, burglar bars and the properly anchored safe. And finally **3. Electric/electronic measures.** This includes motion detectors with shock lighting, the timer and possibly the alarm system.

But hardly any of these measures on its own can significantly increase the burglary resistance; it is the combination that makes the difference! Imagine the burglary being like a hurdle race for the burglar: if he only has to clear one or two hurdles (e.g. only one additional lock and one timer switch in the living room), then he might risk the burglary. But if there are four, five or six hurdles, even ones he cannot detect from the outset and which he encounters only during the burglary, then he will think twice about it and/or call it off. What he dreads is time consumed, noise and cumbersome tools. **The more hurdles (= burglary-resistant measures) you install, the more difficult it will be for the burglar to break into your property.**



Police security advisers gladly come to your home to discuss various protective measures.

What to do after a burglary was committed?

Security experts from the police will gladly advise you objectively (in most cases even free of charge!) and find out together with you at your home, which measures in your individual case are the right ones. See the respective contact addresses in the Annex.

If you want to ask **commercial providers** of security equipment for advice always keep in mind that here also economic interests come into play. Don't be rushed, for instance to buy an expensive alarm system, which you may not need! Always ask **more than one independent expert** for advice or invite **several offers** before making costly purchases or updates.



Police security advisers gladly come to your home to discuss various protective measures.

When you find out about a burglary at your home at first you will be shocked, naturally! However, keep cool and **immediately call the police** (phone 117)! Do not tidy up the crime scene, so that no evidence is destroyed. Determine, together with the police, what was stolen. Best would be to have a **list and even photos of your most important valuables** at hand. This facilitates the search and at the same time makes it more difficult for the culprits to turn the stolen goods into cash.

Such criminal violation of the privacy leaves for most aggrieved parties the unpleasant impression of insecurity and vulnerability. Many of you will ask themselves: "Is my home still my castle?" This is understandable. But remember that burglars **don't zero in on you personally** but "only" on your valuables. And your GP as the first contact person surely has advice how to cope with your difficult emotional situation.

But if you, what fortunately happens only rarely, catch a burglar by chance "with his hands in the cookie jar", **never** try to detain or even subdue him! Withdraw immediately, lock yourself in! And call the police.

This brochure aims to help you **optimizing your burglary protection!** Please use the offers of your police for advice (contact addresses in the Annex)!



Immediately call the police after a burglary and don't tidy up the crime scene!

Contact addresses and links of the cantonal and municipal police forces

Notes

Police force	Website	Phone Security Counselling
Kantonspolizei Aargau	www.polizei-ag.ch	062 835 80 90
Kantonspolizei Appenzell I.-Rh.	www.ai.ch	071 788 95 00
Kantonspolizei Appenzell A.-Rh.	www.polizei.ar.ch	071 343 66 66
Polizei Basel-Landschaft	www.polizei.bl.ch	061 553 30 66
Kantonspolizei Basel-Stadt	www.polizei.bs.ch	061 267 82 84
Kantonspolizei Bern	www.police.be.ch	031 638 56 60
Police cantonale Fribourg	www.policefr.ch	026 305 16 13
Police cantonale de Genève	www.ge.ch/police	022 427 56 00
Kantonspolizei Glarus	www.gl.ch/kapo	055 645 66 66
Kantonspolizei Graubünden	www.kapo.gr.ch	0800 80 30 50
Police cantonale jurassienne	www.jura.ch/police	032 420 65 65
Police municipale de Lausanne	www.lausanne.ch/police	021 315 15 15
Polizia comunale di Lugano	www.lugano.ch	058 866 81 11
Luzerner Polizei	www.polizei.lu.ch	041 248 81 17
Police neuchâteloise	www.ne.ch/police	032 889 90 00
Kantonspolizei Nidwalden	www.kapo.nw.ch	041 618 44 66
Kantonspolizei Obwalden	www.ow.ch/kapo	041 666 65 00
Schaffhauser Polizei	www.shpol.ch	052 624 24 24
Kantonspolizei Schwyz	www.sz.ch/polizei	041 819 29 29
Kantonspolizei Solothurn	www.polizei.so.ch	032 627 71 11
Kantonspolizei St. Gallen	www.kapo.sg.ch	058 229 38 29
Stadtpolizei St. Gallen	www.polizei.stadt.sg.ch	071 224 60 00
Kantonspolizei Thurgau	www.kapo.tg.ch	058 345 28 28
Polizia cantonale ticinese	www.polizia.ti.ch	0848 25 55 55
Kantonspolizei Uri	www.ur.ch/kapo	041 875 22 11
Police cantonale valaisanne	www.polizeiwallis.ch	027 326 56 56
Police cantonale vaudoise	www.police.vd.ch	021 644 44 44
Zuger Polizei	www.zugerpolizei.ch	041 728 41 41
Kantonspolizei Zürich	www.zh.ch/einbruchschutz	058 648 14 10
Stadtpolizei Zürich	www.stadtpolizei.ch/praevention	044 411 74 44
Landespolizei Fürstentum Liechtenstein	www.landespolizei.li	+423 236 71 11



Schweizerische Kriminalprävention
Haus der Kantone
Speichergasse 6
Postfach
3000 Bern 7
www.skppsc.ch