A home security assessment is essential to identifying weaknesses in your physical security that might provide an easy opportunity for a crime to occur. While nothing can make your home absolutely burglar-proof, these checks are intended to create security layers that, if implemented, can serve to reduce criminal opportunity and make it more difficult to force entry into your home. A small investment of time and money can reduce your chances of being a victim of burglary.

Burglars like easy opportunities. If they have to make a lot of noise, spend a lot of time, or risk being seen, the chances are they won’t bother. A good rule of thumb is the 3 minute delay test. If you can deny entry for 3 minutes or more – it is likely the burglars will go elsewhere.

Complete this checklist challenge to determine how well your home is secured against burglary. Ignore questions not relevant to your own home. Remember, every NO answer is a threat to your home security.

**Outside Security**

- Is your house number visible from the street?
- Is there sufficient illumination around your home to allow visible inspection of any dark areas around it?
- Is there sufficient external lighting outside every door to illuminate visitors?
- Do neighbours and passers-by have a clear view of your home?
- Have you trimmed all hedges and shrubs so they can’t hide a burglar at work on the windows and doors?
- Have you ever walked around your house looking for ways a burglar might be able to get in?
- Do you keep tools or ladders, etc., in places inaccessible to potential burglars?
- Are machines, tools and other high value items stored in garages or sheds securely padlocked or chained to prevent removal?
- Is your shed / garage secure?

**Neighbours**

- Have you a reliable neighbour whom you can notify of your travel plans and give a key to, with a request for a periodic house check?
- Do you have a neighbour collect your mail or newspapers when you are away or do you avail of MailMinder from An Post?
- Do you have your neighbour park his / her extra car in your driveway when you are away from home?
- Do you arrange to have your lawn mowed?
- Do you notify the Gardaí of prolonged absences from your home?
- Are you a member of a community crime prevention scheme (Neighbourhood Watch, Community Alert etc)?

For more information visit www.garda.ie or contact your local Crime Prevention Officer.
Doors & Windows

Are all your external doors properly fitted and equipped with appropriate secure locking systems? (i.e. 5-lever mortice locks for wooden doors, multi-point locking for uPVC doors etc.)

If you have glass panelled doors – are they reinforced in some way so that they cannot be shattered?

Have you a wide-angled viewer in your front/main entrance doors or other means of viewing callers?

Do you have a door chain / limiter fitted and do you use it?

Since moving into your home (where there may have been a previous occupier) have you had the locks changed?

Are your spare keys kept with a trusted neighbour and never left under an external mat, flower pot etc?

Do you lock your external doors when away from home, no matter how short a time?

Do you lock the doors out of your view when working in the garden / yard?

Have you installed an additional lock(s) to your sliding glass / patio doors?

Are the garage / outhouse doors protected with quality locks or deadbolts?

Do you close and lock your garage / outhouse doors?

Are all your windows secure?

Can the window openings be restricted for ventilation?

Do you check to see if all windows are secured when you leave your home?

Electronic Security

Do you have an intruder alarm system or CCTV system fitted and do you use it?

Do they conform to recognised international standards?

Is it maintained and serviced annually?

Do you know how to operate and use your alarm or CCTV system functions?

Have you considered connecting it to a monitoring centre or your mobile phone? (If your phone is out of coverage who will be notified in the event of an alarm)

Have you appointed a keyholder(s) and will they respond appropriately to an alarm activation?

Inside Security

Do you ask for identification before allowing unknown tradespeople / callers into your home?

Do you avoid leaving cash at home?

Have you automatic timers on some lights when your house is vacant?

Does your home always look like someone is at home?

Have you recorded serial numbers of your valuables?

Have you, for identification purposes, photographed your valuables especially items for which you have no serial numbers such as jewellery, chiná, crystal, paintings, antiques etc?

Are your car / house keys kept in a location not visible from the outside?