

What is Burglary?

According to Kansas State Statute 21-5807, Burglary is

Defined as:

Burglary is knowingly and without authority entering into or remaining within any:

Building, manufactured home, mobile home, tent or other structure which is a dwelling, with intent to commit a felony, theft or sexual battery therein;

Building, manufactured home, mobile home, tent or other structure which is not a dwelling, with intent to commit a felony, theft or sexual battery therein; or

Motor vehicle, aircraft, watercraft, railroad car of other means of conveyance of persons or property, with intent to commit a felony, theft or sexual battery therein.

Burglary is a Felony crime.

How do Burglars operate and get in?

In rural settings, burglars, intent on stealing property, rarely watch or “case” a property or residence in advance. They will simply drive through an area and look for a residence that gives them easy access from the roadway and looks as though no one is home. They will then knock on doors or sound a horn to further determine if anyone is around the area. If confronted, the burglar will give some sort of story to explain their presence and, normally, quickly leave. If no one is home, the burglar will then go about the business of making entry. Most rural residential Burglaries take place on Monday through Friday between the hours of 9:00 AM and 2:00 PM, the most likely times that you and your family are away from the home.

If you have ever locked yourself out of the house, you may have found yourself walking around the exterior of your home looking for the easiest way in. Burglars do the same thing. They look at your doors and windows. The burglar may or may not be successful entering your house depending on their age, physical size, experience and determination. Another factor is the type of doors, windows and hardware that are installed.

Entry doors can be pried or kicked. Every door should be secured with at least a single-cylinder deadbolt lock. A single cylinder lock has a turn lever on the inside of the door and requires a key on the outside. The deadbolt should have at least a one inch throw. A security strike plate with four inch screws is recommended. A standard strike plate is secured with only two quarter inch long screws while a security strike plate has four, four inch long screws. Make sure all exterior doors have a deadbolt.

Overhead garage doors are usually a problem only when they are left open. It only takes a few seconds for a burglar to walk in and take valuable items from your garage. Keep overhead doors closed at all times.

Sliding glass doors are often targeted. Do not trust the lock that comes with the door. There several different styles of locks that offers better protection. An old broom handle can be cut and laid down on the inside of the track to help hold the door closed. This may improve security, but an additional lock such as a burglar bar is still recommended.

The problem with most windows is that they are left open or they are closed but unlocked. If possible keep your windows closed and locked, especially if they are low to the ground. If you must keep your window open while you are away or asleep, select a lock that will allow you to secure the window when it is partially opened. Most adults cannot get their head through an opening of six inches or less.

Identifying your Property

Please take the time to record the make, model and serial numbers of any item you feel a thief may be interested in stealing. The serial number is most important as it is unique to a particular item. If your home is burglarized and you have not recorded these numbers it will be very difficult for law enforcement to find and return your property. A large majority of property taken in home burglaries has serial numbers but the homeowner never records those numbers.

For those items that do not have a serial number, you might want to consider applying or engraving your own personal number on the item. Some people use their driver's license number or a combination of numbers familiar to them. Do not use your Social Security Number. Store your list in a place that is not accessible to burglars, a good suggestion would be to maintain a copy and keep the two lists in separate locations.

Hand tools such as wrenches and sockets do not usually have serial numbers. They are easy to pawn at pawn shops and one wrench pretty much looks like another unless you engrave it.

An engraver should not be used on jewelry items unless a professional jeweler does the work. If you decide to engrave a firearm, pick a place that is not highly visible such as under the grips. Engraving a firearm could affect its resale value.

Expensive jewelry should be appraised and photographed. If you can, take a close-up picture of any item you highly value. If you do not have a camera, try making a drawing to give law enforcement an idea of what to look for. Describe any jewelry as best you can before it is stolen. If your initials are engraved on the inside of a ring, please record this also.

What can I do?

You know your neighborhood best. If you see something suspicious please call 911 and report the suspicious activity right away. Sometime citizens see something that they know is not normal for their neighborhood, but they are reluctant to call law enforcement thinking we will be bothered or are too busy with other things. This is not the case, call 911 and we will respond as quickly as is possible. Please call 911 if you see suspicious activity.

If you see a strange vehicle driving around the area, someone peeking in windows, going door to door with strange requests or questions or someone knocking on front doors and then going to the back door, you should call 911 and advise them of this activity.

If possible note the race, age, sex, height, weight, hair color and type of clothing worn by the suspect or suspects. Also note the make, model, tag number and color of the vehicle they are driving. At night, you may only be able to say the car was (large, medium, small) in size and a (2 door or 4 door). Note if there is anything unusual about the car such as body damage, rust damage, tinted windows or loud muffler. Any or all of these details are important to law enforcement.

Before going on vacation there are several things you can do to protect your home. Notify law enforcement of the dates you will be gone and who to contact in the event of an emergency. This information will be given to the officers who patrol your area. Notify your family, trusted friends and neighbors of your plans so they can help to watch over your property. Make arrangements to

have newspapers and the mail picked up regularly. Cut your grass before you leave or arrange to have it mowed while you are gone.

Try to give your home a “lived in” appearance. Remember, burglars don’t want contact with people and will avoid a residence if they feel someone is there or may soon return. You might want to consider leaving a radio turned on in your garage or an outbuilding that can easily be heard as someone approaches the property. One resident placed a small sign near the front door that read “Day Sleeper – Do Not Disturb” giving the impression that there might be someone inside.

Motion activated outdoor lighting provides a great deal of deterrence to intruders especially if the lighting is sufficient to cover the entire outside of a building or home. Having the lights come on unexpectedly gives the impression that someone on the inside is controlling them. Consider placing timers on lamps in several different locations inside your house to, once again, give the intruder the idea that the home is occupied.

If you discover a burglary, call 911 immediately. Use a cell phone or go to another location to make the call. Do not enter a structure you suspect of being burglarized, the intruders may still be present. The lack of vehicles nearby does not mean they are gone, they may have an accomplice or vehicle waiting out of sight. Wait for law enforcement a safe distance away from the scene. Law enforcement will want the scene to be preserved for the possible collection of evidence.