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## Home Security & Maintenance Topics Everyone Should Know

A guide to home protection essentials, from how to secure your home, to maintaining it, and guarding it from water damage.





# Making the Most of Your Home Experience

If you are like most people, your home is your sanctuary and the center of your family's lives and activities. What can you do to keep your house safe, secure, and well-maintained?

We've put together a few ideas to help you make the most of your home experience, from security and protection to maintenance and repair. Let's take a closer look at all the things you can do to make your house a safe, comfortable, and thriving home.



## CHAPTER 1:

# Secure Your Doors and Windows

It may not surprise you to know that most burglars enter homes through doors and windows. That's why it's important to secure them properly. Here are five tips for protecting these entry points:

1

**Install sturdy deadbolts:** Deadbolts are an effective way to secure doors. Be sure to use a high-quality deadbolt that extends at least one inch into the door frame.

2

**Use a security bar:** A security bar can be placed at the bottom of your sliding windows and doors to prevent them from being opened from the outside.

3

**Install window locks:** Selecting a high-quality window lock is crucial for your home's safety. You can use a variety of different locks, such as pin locks, sash locks, or keyed locks.

4

**Use a peephole or security camera:** Install a peephole or a security camera at the front of your home to help you see who is outside before opening the door.

5

**Keep your landscaping in check:** Keep bushes and trees near your windows and doors trimmed so that they don't provide cover for burglars. This will also make your property more visible to neighbors and passersby, which can deter intruders from attempting to break in.

## Profile of a Typical Home Burglar

Most burglars tend to be opportunistic and prefer to target homes that are in quiet residential neighborhoods. They may also look for homes with poor security, such as easy-to-open windows or doors, and may often work alone or in small groups.





## CHAPTER 2:

# Install a Home Security System

An effective home security system can help to prevent burglaries and provide your family with valuable peace of mind. Here are features to consider when investing in a home security system:

1

**Monitoring:** Look for a system that offers 24/7 professional monitoring. This means that if an alarm is triggered, the monitoring center will be immediately alerted and can dispatch the appropriate authorities.

2

**Mobile access:** Choose a system that allows you to monitor and control your security system remotely using your smartphone or other device. This will allow you to arm or disarm your system, receive alerts, and view live video feeds from anywhere.

3

**Customization:** Look for a system that can be customized to meet your specific needs. This might include adding extra sensors or cameras, or adjusting the sensitivity of the system to reduce false alarms.

4

**Smart home integration:** Consider a system that can integrate with other smart home devices, such as lights, locks, thermostats, and even water leak detection systems (see [Chapter 10](#)). This can help automate your home and increase security.

5

**Professional installation:** While some systems are designed for DIY installation, it's often best to choose a system that offers professional installation. This will ensure that the system is set up correctly and will work as intended.

6

**Cost:** Consider the cost of the system, including any ongoing monthly fees. Look for a system that offers good value for money and fits within your budget.

# 3x

Homes without a security system are **three times more likely** to be targeted by burglars.







## CHAPTER 4:

# Be Mindful of Social Media

Be careful what you post on social media, especially when you're away from home. Posting about your vacation can alert potential burglars that your home is empty. Wait until you're home to share your photos and experiences.

1

**78% of burglars** use social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to identify potential targets. They search for information such as vacation plans, location check-ins, and posts about valuable possessions. (Source: Homewatch Group)

2

**85% of surveyed burglars** admitted they would regularly check social media to identify potential homes to target. (Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime)

3

**80% of burglars** believed that social media made it easier to find and plan burglaries, as users often unwittingly provide valuable information about their routines, travel plans, and possessions. (Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime)

4

**Four out of five convicted burglars** considered Facebook as the most preferred social media platform to gather information about potential victims. (Source: Security Info Watch)

5

**40% of surveyed individuals** who had been victims of burglaries believed that their social media activity played a role in the incident. (Source: National Crime Prevention Council)

A good social media rule is to post your vacation photos after returning home to avoid attracting the attention of burglars.





## CHAPTER 5:

# Secure Your WiFi Network

Securing a home WiFi network is crucial to protecting your data, devices, and personal information from unauthorized access. Here are three essential tips to help you strengthen the security of your home WiFi network:

### **Change the default network name (SSID) and password.**

When you set up a new WiFi router, it often comes with default network settings. Hackers are well aware of these default credentials and can easily exploit them to gain access to your network. To enhance security, change the default network name (SSID) and set a strong, unique password. Use a combination of letters, numbers, and special characters for a more secure password. Regularly update your password to further minimize the risk of unauthorized access.

### **Enable WPA2/WPA3 encryption.**

Encryption is a critical aspect of securing your WiFi network. It scrambles the data transmitted between your devices and the router, making it unreadable to anyone attempting to intercept it. WiFi Protected Access II (WPA2) and WPA3 are the recommended encryption protocols. Check your router settings and ensure that your network is configured with either WPA2 or WPA3 encryption. Avoid using outdated encryption methods like Wired Equivalent Privacy (WEP) as they are vulnerable to attacks.

### **Disable remote management and guest networks if not needed.**

Remote management allows you to access your router's settings from outside your home network. While it can be convenient, it also introduces potential security risks. Disable remote management unless it is absolutely necessary. Also, if you don't frequently have guests accessing your WiFi network, consider disabling the guest network feature. This reduces the number of potential entry points for attackers and helps maintain better control over your network.

### **These tips are just the beginning of securing your home WiFi network.**

Regularly update your router's firmware, install security patches, and consider additional measures like enabling a firewall, enabling MAC address filtering, and using a virtual private network (VPN) for enhanced protection.

Stay informed about the latest security practices to keep your home network safeguarded against potential threats.







## CHAPTER 6:

# Keep Your Yard Maintained

A well-maintained yard can help to not only improve your quality of living but also help to extend the life of your gutters, roof, fencing, home foundation, and windows and doors. Here are a few things you can do to maintain your yard.

### **Mowing and trimming.**

Keeping your grass at a consistent height promotes healthy growth and helps to prevent weed growth. Adjust your lawn mower deck to the recommended setting for your grass type and mow regularly (about once a week). Additionally, trim the edges of your lawn and around trees, fences, and flower beds to create a clean and manicured appearance.

### **Watering and irrigation.**

Proper watering is crucial for ongoing yard maintenance. To reduce evaporation, water during the early morning or late evening. Use a sprinkler system or irrigation method that ensures even coverage across the entire lawn. Monitor the weather conditions and adjust your watering schedule accordingly to avoid over or under-watering.

### **Weed control and fertilization.**

Weeds can quickly take over a yard and detract from its overall appearance. Regularly inspect your yard for weeds and promptly remove them. Applying a pre-emergent weed control product in early spring can help prevent weed seeds from germinating. Additionally, fertilize your lawn as recommended for your specific grass type. Proper fertilization provides essential nutrients and promotes healthy growth.

### **Plant and landscaping maintenance.**

Besides your lawn, your yard may have various plants, trees, and landscaping features that require attention. Prune bushes, shrubs, and trees to maintain their appearance and remove dead or diseased branches. Mulching around plants helps retain moisture, suppress weeds, and improve the aesthetics of your yard. Regularly inspect and maintain any outdoor structures, such as decks, fences, or pathways, to ensure they are in good condition.

Remember to adjust your maintenance practices based on the specific needs of your climate, soil type, and plant types. Regular care and attention will keep your yard looking its best throughout the year.





## CHAPTER 7:

# Install Outdoor Lighting

Installing outdoor lighting around a home offers several advantages that contribute to the security, access, and appearance of the property. Here are six key benefits.

**Enhanced safety and security:** Outdoor lighting improves safety by illuminating pathways, driveways, and entrances, reducing the risk of accidents caused by tripping or falling in the dark. Well-lit exteriors also act as a deterrent to potential intruders, making your home less attractive to burglars and enhancing overall security.

**Extended usability of outdoor spaces:** With outdoor lighting, you can extend the usability of your outdoor areas beyond daylight hours. It allows you to enjoy your patio, deck, or backyard in the evening, creating a welcoming ambiance for social gatherings, relaxation, or outdoor dining.

**Improved navigation and wayfinding:** Outdoor lighting helps with navigation, making it easier to find your way around your property at night. Well-placed lights along pathways, stairs, and entrances guide guests and family members safely to the desired areas, preventing accidents and ensuring convenience.

**Spotlighting architectural features:** Outdoor lighting can accentuate the architectural features of your home, such as columns, archways, or unique textures. By strategically placing lights, you can create visual interest, add depth, and showcase the beauty of your home's exterior, enhancing its overall curb appeal.

**Landscape enhancement:** Illuminating your garden, trees, and plants with outdoor lighting creates a stunning visual effect during the nighttime. It highlights the natural beauty of your landscape and adds depth and texture to your outdoor spaces, making your property more visually appealing.

**Increased property value:** Well-designed and thoughtfully installed outdoor lighting can significantly enhance the value of your home. It improves the overall aesthetics and functionality of the property, making it more attractive to potential buyers should you decide to sell in the future.

These benefits make installing outdoor lighting a worthwhile investment that not only enhances the safety and security of your home but also adds to its visual appeal and value.



## CHAPTER 8:

# Have Regular Home Inspections

From your home roof and foundation to your HVAC unit, scheduling regular maintenance and inspections of key areas of your home will help you to prevent major repairs and headaches when you least expect them.

**Home inspections help identify potential problems before they escalate into major issues.** By detecting early signs of wear and tear, structural weaknesses, or hidden damages, homeowners can address these concerns promptly and prevent them from worsening. This proactive approach saves both time and money by avoiding costly repairs or replacements down the line.

**Home inspections contribute to maintaining a safe living environment.** Professionals conducting inspections have the expertise to identify safety hazards such as faulty electrical wiring, gas leaks, or mold growth. By addressing these risks promptly, homeowners can protect their families from potential accidents, health issues (from possible mold or lead issues), or even property damage. Regular inspections provide peace of mind, knowing that your home is a secure and healthy space for everyone in your family.

**Home inspections help preserve the value of your property.** Whether you plan to sell your house in the future or not, maintaining its condition is essential for retaining its market value. By addressing maintenance needs and making necessary repairs, you can prevent the depreciation of your property's worth. Additionally, a well-maintained home is more appealing to potential buyers, which can translate into a higher selling price and a quicker sale if you decide to put it on the market.

**Home inspections are crucial for maintaining your house.** By investing in regular inspections, homeowners can take proactive measures to address maintenance needs and prevent issues from becoming more significant, saving time, money, and ensuring the longevity of their homes.

Home inspections  
save buyers an  
average of \$14,000  
per home purchase.

Porch.com Research Study, 2020



## CHAPTER 9

# Be Prepared for Emergencies

Being prepared for home emergencies is important for safeguarding your family and property in times of unexpected events. With a well-thought-out plan in place, you can face home emergencies with confidence. Here are five tips for preparing for home emergencies.

1

**Create an emergency plan:** Develop a comprehensive emergency strategy that includes escape routes, designated meeting points, and a communication strategy. Include all household members in the planning process, and ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities during an emergency.

2

**Assemble an emergency kit:** Put together a well-stocked emergency kit that includes essential items such as non-perishable food, water, a first aid kit, flashlights, batteries, a portable phone charger, a battery-powered radio, important documents, and any necessary medications. Keep the kit in an easily accessible location.

3

**Stay informed:** Stay updated on potential hazards and emergency situations in your area. Sign up for local emergency alerts or download relevant smartphone apps to receive timely notifications. Pay attention to weather forecasts, news updates, and official instructions to stay informed about any potential threats.

4

**Secure your home:** Take measures to secure your home against potential emergencies. Install smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, and fire extinguishers in appropriate locations. Inspect and maintain your home regularly to identify any safety hazards and address them promptly.

5

**Practice emergency drills:** Regularly practice emergency drills with your household members to ensure everyone knows what to do in different scenarios. Conduct fire drills, earthquake drills, or any other relevant drills based on the most likely emergencies in your area. Practicing will help you respond more effectively and reduce panic during an actual emergency.

Preparedness is key to effectively handling home emergencies. By following these tips, you can increase your readiness and minimize risks.



## CHAPTER 10

# Protect Your Home from Water Damage

Water damage can cause significant damage to your home and be costly to repair. Install a leak detection system with an automatic water main shutoff option to protect your home (or second home) from catastrophic water damage.

### You may be surprised that we strongly recommend WaterCop!

For home and commercial leak detection, WaterCop has become the industry leader and protects thousands of homes and commercial properties across the world with a proven solution that detects leaks and then automatically shuts off the water at the main supply line.



### How WaterCop works.

The WaterCop system utilizes an automatic shut-off valve installed on the water supply line of a home or commercial building. When sensors detect a leak, a signal is sent to the shut-off valve and water flow is quickly stopped to downstream areas reducing the chance of major flooding.

### Stay informed, even when you're away.

A SmartConnect feature works through the WaterCop app and allows homeowners (and property managers) to remotely monitor and control the WaterCop system in one easy-to-manage place. With SmartConnect, you will instantly receive notification of your WaterCop system's valve position changes.

If you would like to learn more about the WaterCop system, learn more on our website or contact us at 800-545-3636.



“We travel quite a bit and WaterCop helps us worry less when we are away. We plan to add another one to our new vacation house soon.”

Pam B., Scarborough, New York





Your house is not just a big investment. It's the place you call home.

We hope you find these tips helpful in protecting, maintaining, and making the most of your home experience for you and your family.

If you would like to learn more about the WaterCop system, [learn more at watercop.com](http://watercop.com) or contact us at 800-545-3636.