

MADISON POLICE DEPARTMENT

LARRY R. MUNCEY, CHIEF OF POLICE

100 Hughes Road, Madison, Alabama 35758

Crime Prevention Tips

How can I make my home safer?

If you're locked out of your home, can you still get in? . . . through an unlocked window in the back, or using an extra key hidden under a flowerpot or up on the ledge?

If you can break in, so can a burglar! A small investment of time and money can make your home more secure and can reduce your chances of being a victim of burglary, assault, or vandalism.

Get to know your neighbors.

Watchful neighbors, who look out for you, as well as themselves, are in front-line defense against crime. In almost half of all residential burglaries and vandalism cases, offenders enter through an unlocked door or unlocked window, or poorly lit areas around the home.

Check the locks:

Make sure every external door has sturdy, well-installed deadbolt lock with a minimum of a 1" bolt.

Secure sliding glass doors with commercially available locks or with a broomstick or wooden dowel in the track to jam the door, in case someone tries to pry it open.

Secure double-hung windows by using key locks. Secure the basement windows too.

Don't hide keys in mailboxes, planters, or under doormats. Give an extra key to a neighbor you trust.

If you've just moved into a new house or apartment, have the locks changed.

Check the doors:

Locks aren't effective if they're on flimsy doors.

Make sure all exterior doors are metal or solid, 1 3/4" hardwood.

Doors should fit tightly in their frames, with hinge pins on the inside.

Install a peephole or wide-angle viewer in all entry doors, so you can see who is outside without opening the door. Door chains are not security devices-they break easily and won't keep out an intruder.

Check the outside:

To discourage burglars and vandals from selecting your home as their target of opportunity, make sure to:

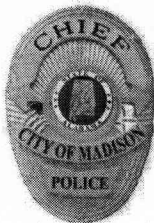
Trim shrubbery that hides doors or windows. Cut tree limbs that could help a thief climb into windows.

Turn on outside lights after dark to illuminate porches, entrances and yards-front & back. Consider timers that turn on outside lights, or install motion detectors.

Keep your yard well maintained. Store ladders and tools inside your locked garage, basement, or storage shed when you're not using them.

Clearly display your house number, so police and other emergency vehicles can find your home quickly.

To Protect and Serve



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Put lights and a radio on timers to create the illusion that someone is at home when you go away. Leave shades, blinds and curtains in normal positions. Stop the mail and newspapers, or ask a neighbor to take them in.

Update your home inventory, listing valuable items like DVD players, stereos, cameras and computers. Take photos or make videos of items, list descriptions and serial numbers.

Video Surveillance Systems

Many Home Owners Associations have invested in video surveillance systems, not only to identify criminal offenders, but deter criminal behavior from occurring.

Video surveillance systems can be simple and inexpensive or elaborate and cost several thousand dollars. Most HOA's tend use these around clubhouses, pools, parks, and tennis courts to discourage loitering, unauthorized use of facilities, and criminal behavior.

Individual homeowners have begun to invest in relatively inexpensive home surveillance systems that can be bought from local electronics stores and easily installed.

What about alarms?

If you have valuables in your home, or if you live in an isolated area or a neighborhood vulnerable to break-ins, consider an alarm system.

Before you invest in alarms:

Check with several companies and decide what level of security fits your needs.

Look for an established company and check its references before using them.

Learn how to use your system properly.

Burglars can take more than your property!

Burglars generally don't want to run into their victims. But if they're surprised by someone coming home, or if they pick an occupied home, someone may get hurt.

If you see a screen that has been cut, a broken window, or a door that's been left open, don't go in. Call the police from a neighbor's house or a public phone.

If you hear a noise that sounds like someone breaking in or moving around, quietly call the police and wait calmly until they arrive. If you can leave safely, do so. Otherwise, lock yourself in a room, or, if the intruder enters the room you are in pretend to be asleep.

Think carefully before buying a firearm for protection. Guns can be stolen and sold to anyone, or captured and used on you or the police. If you do own a gun, keep it secured and learn how to use it safely.

Know the Madison Police Department Contact Numbers

Dispatch Emergency	911
Dispatch Non-emergency	256-722-7190
MPD Records	256-772-5689
MPD Investigations	256-772-5674
MPD Community Resource	256-772-5658

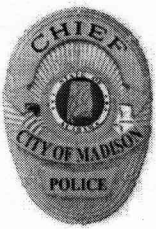
To Protect and Serve

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- Don't walk or jog alone. Walk in well-lighted and populated areas.
- Stay alert and attuned to things around you, especially suspicious persons or activities.
- Participate in personal protection. Mark your valuables with a preselected number.
- Lock your car and room doors to prevent theft.
- Keep your valuables, purse or wallet out of plain view from the windows, doorways, and cars.
- Have your keys ready and enter your residence, office, or car as quickly as possible.
- Be confident. Walk and carry yourself with confidence.
- Know your limitations; Safety, Alcohol, Property, and New friends.
- Get acquainted with your neighborhood. Know who belongs and who doesn't.
- If you're going somewhere alone or with a new friend, let someone know where you are going.
- Program the Madison Police Department dispatch number in your cell phones to report suspicious activity or if you feel threatened or uncomfortable: 256-722-7190.

WHAT IS SUSPICIOUS?

"Am I witnessing a crime?" Most of us have found ourselves wondering this at some time or other. However, because we are not really sure, we tend to ignore what we have just seen and, hoping it wasn't so, we continue about our business.

"PEOPLE AREN'T SUSPICIOUS, BEHAVIORS ARE!"

Signs and behavior to look for that may be suspicious:

- A person running.
- A stranger carrying property.
- A person going door-to-door in a building or a residential area.
- Any person forcibly entering a locked vehicle, dorm room or even a classroom.
- Business transactions being conducted from a vehicle.
- One or more persons sitting in a parked car exhibiting suspicious behavior.
- A juvenile or female being forced into a vehicle.
- A person exhibiting unusual mental or physical symptoms.

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