

Stop Thieves Dead In Their Tracks With Deadbolt Locks, Other Tricks

Builders Association Meets Monthly

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Mrs. Means, the only employee of the association, works out of a small office on the second floor of the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce building in Shal-lotte. She keeps office hours Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Shreve said the association plans to make and install a new sign in front of the chamber of commerce office this year and add a new entrance at the rear of the building.

Formed in March 1984, The South Brunswick Islands HBA is one of two home builders associations in Brunswick County, with the other serving the Southport-Oak Island area.

The association is one of about 75 local home builders associations across the state that together boast more than 10,000 members.

The South Brunswick Islands Home Builders Association meets the fourth Thursday of each month at Sea Trail Plantation's Tavern on the Tee at Sunset Beach. Social hour starts at 6:30 p.m. and meetings begin at 7 p.m.

For more information on the association, call Mrs. Means during office hours at 754-5544 or Shreve at 754-6614.

BY RAHN ADAMS

Don Gates likes deadbolt locks. He doesn't care about the particular brand, just as long as it's a double-keyed, double-cylinder, case-hardened, heavy-duty deadbolt lock.

Gates isn't a hardware salesman. He is crime prevention officer for the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department, and his job is to help local residents find ways to protect their homes and property from thieves, whether by advising home owners to buy and install deadbolt locks or by encouraging them to join neighborhood watch programs.



GATES

As advisor to Brunswick County's 40 community watch organizations, Gates can reel off a list of crime prevention measures as easily as anyone else recites their ABC's. And if you can't absorb all the information in one sitting, he gladly will give you a copy of the N.C. Department of Crime Control and Public Safety's publication, "Starting a Community Watch," which includes most of the tips he shares.

His first suggestion, of course, is to install deadbolt locks on all out-

side doors to your home. "Don't buy the most inexpensive lock when you go to the store," he advises, "because you're going to get what you pay for."

Double-keyed locks are better than models with thumb turns on the inside, he added, because an intruder who gains entry into the house by some other means still wouldn't be able to open the door from the inside without a key. When residents are at home, they should keep a key in the lock so that they can open the door quickly in the event of an emergency.

Also, Gates noted that if a house key is lost or "compromised" (loaned to someone who might copy the key), the home owner should get the cores of his locks replaced—a job that can be done by any competent locksmith.

Since windows also are favorite points of entry with burglars, the officer recommends that key-operated window latches be installed. Sliding glass doors—which Gates called "the biggest pain"—should be secured with a pin-type locking device; a dowel rod laid in the door track; or a "charlie bar," a device that is fastened across the center of the door.

Alarm systems also are popular

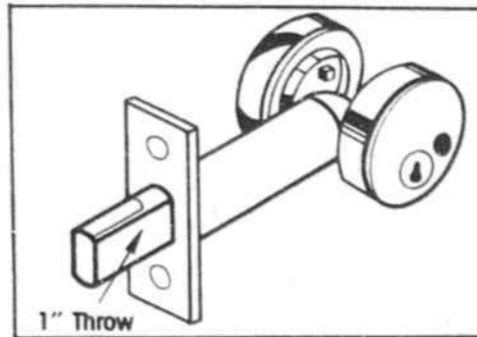


ILLUSTRATION FROM "STARTING A COMMUNITY WATCH"

A DEADBOLT LOCK often is a home owner's first line of protection against a residential break-in. Law enforcement agencies recommend double-cylinder deadbolt locks, such as the one pictured above.

for home protection. Pointing out that several different types of alarms are available, Gates again said individuals shouldn't "skimp" on expense when choosing an alarm system. He added that the sheriff's department can recommend particular systems to meet individual home owner's needs.

Measures also can be taken outside the house to make a criminal's "job" more difficult. "Don't let shrubbery grow up so that a thief can hide and work on your windows," Gates said.

Another simple tip is to keep

front and back porchlights turned on at all times after sundown, not just when the home is unoccupied. "Any time you light your premises up, you're going to discourage someone from breaking into your house," Gates said.

By leaving outside lights on all night, no pattern is set which would let "neighborhood crooks" know when no one is home, the officer explained. He said General Electric Corporation recommends using a 60-watt bulb on the front porch and a 40-watt bulb on the back porch, because 100 watts of electricity can be burned inexpensively.

Just in case a thief would be able to get inside a house despite the aforementioned crime prevention measure, home owners should be sure all their high-value items are photographed and engraved with their driver's license numbers (preceded by "NCDL," if they are North Carolina residents).

Gates said Social Security numbers should not be engraved on property, since local law enforcement agencies do not have access to the Social Security computer system. If stolen goods inscribed with a driver's license are recovered, local authorities can trace the owner through the N.C. Department of Motor Vehicles.

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