

An Garda Síochána

Crime Prevention Information Sheet



Home Security Doors



Door Security

Most intruders entering your property will either enter through a door or a window. It is not uncommon for people to leave doors and windows open, un-locked or not properly secured. Most external domestic doors come in one of the following variety of designs and strengths -

- Solid hardwood
- Hardwood incorporating glass panelling
- Aluminium
- uPVC
- Sliding or Patio doors
- French doors

The strength and security of any door is primarily governed by the quality of the material used in its construction and the standard of the locks and fittings used.

Whether an intruder will gain access to your home through your external doors may depend on -

- the strength of the construction material,
- the quality of the locks,
- proper fitting and installation

We can reduce their attraction as an entry point for the burglar by trying to minimize these risk features.

Hardwood Doors

Hardwood doors should be a minimum of 44mm in thickness and capable of supporting both rim and mortice locks and hung on at least three 100mm hinges. Glass panelling, where fitted, should be laminated to at least 6.4mm in thickness. The frame of the door should be securely bolted to the wall at no less than 600mm intervals around the frame.

uPVC and Aluminium Doors

These types of doors are generally unsuitable to retro-fit with security devices and may, where this is done, compromise any installation warranty. In these circumstances, you should always consult with the fabricator or installer as appropriate. Most are commonly fitted

with a multi-point locking system and generally offer a high degree of security protection.

Door Security Features

The front access door to any home should be fitted, where possible and appropriate, with the following additional security features -

- **Door Viewer**, which should be wide-angled, that will allow the occupant to identify callers before the door is opened.
- **Door Chain or Limiter** which allows the occupant to restrict the complete opening of the door until desired.
- **Hinge Bolts** which will strengthen the door against forced entry.
- **Letter Tray/Restrictor**

Door Security & Standards

It is recommended that all external entry/exit doors are designed to withstand forced intrusion to an acceptable level e.g. the current British security standard for doors PAS 24-1 'Doors of Enhanced Security' or equivalent. These will have been subjected to specific security test conditions.

Currently, most doors fitted to houses will not conform to this standard. The ideal domestic security door will incorporate most or all of the following security features:

- 5 lever mortice deadlock lock to BS 3621 - top and bottom
- Rim-latch lock with dead lock facility
- Hinge bolts to reinforce the hinge side of the door
- Door chain and wide angle viewer

There are a wide variety of locks and locking devices available on the market today. It should be remembered, however that fitting a quality security lock to an inherently weak door, or fitting a poor lock to a quality door will not in any real way improve your security.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS OR OTHER CRIME PREVENTION ISSUES,
PLEASE CONTACT
your local GARDÁ CRIME PREVENTION OFFICER
or
visit the Garda website at www.garda.ie**

Domestic locks are generally rim-latch, mortice (deadlock or sashlock), or a may have a multi-locking bolt mechanism. All should comply with an appropriate security standard e.g. BS 3621 or equivalent. This will ensure that the locks have been security tested to withstand forced hacking, drilling and sawing for a defined period.

All security devices should be fitted with strong screws or bolts. Deadlocks, when fitted and used, will also deny burglars removing property from your home via the doors.

Glass panels on or around doors are particularly vulnerable and should be avoided where possible. Alternatively they should be replaced with laminated glass to a minimum of 6.4mm thickness.

Letterboxes

Where letterboxes are fitted to a door they should be at least 400mm or 16 inches from any locking mechanism. A letterbox cage will also help prevent a thief from accessing the locks manually.

Patio Doors

Patio doors are generally either sliding or double leaf "French Doors" - sometimes known as "French Windows".

The most common security weakness with sliding patio doors is to be found in their fitting along the running rails. In some instances it is possible to lift the door completely out of the running rail. Approved anti-lift devices should be fitted.

Security bars fitted internally, which will prevent the doors being parted even if the locking mechanism is forced, are also strongly recommended.

'Shoot Bolts' or 'Sliding Bolts', whichever is appropriate, may also be fitted to reinforce security in both Patio and French doors. A reputable locksmith will advise accordingly.

Internal Doors

Most internal domestic doors are hollow core and fitted with two-lever mortice locks. They should not be regarded as providing good security but rather as an additional time delay measure. It is generally considered prudent to leave these doors unlocked, when the house is vacant, as they will seldom restrict the determined intruder and will likely further add to any vandalism that is committed.

Keys

A common custom is to leave keys inserted in their locking mechanism. This is a foolhardy practice as it can assist the burglar in two ways. Firstly, they can be used by a trespasser to deny you entry to your home and secondly; they can be stolen or removed and copied. In the case of doors where entry or exit is solely key-controlled it is imperative that the location and safe storage of these keys is known to all the occupants in the event of a fire or emergency evacuation. Keys should generally be colour coded or numbered rather than named as this will hinder their identification to the intruder.

Fire Precautions

Any physical changes or alterations made to doors in your home should not needlessly impede or restrict your exit in the event of a fire alert or evacuation.

Keys should always be kept accessible to occupants but out of reach of potential trespassers or burglars.

Remember!

When the home is occupied, fire safety is your priority; however, when the home is unoccupied, security is your main concern.

The advice contained in this information sheet is not intended to be exhaustive or absolute. At all times it is wise to seek appropriate professional advice where physical or structural changes are made to your property to improve security.

Nothing contained in this publication should be interpreted as mandatory, obligatory or designed to conflict with any statutory regulations.

Useful Contacts and Links

The Garda National Crime Prevention Unit,
Garda H.Q., Harcourt Square, Dublin 2.
Tel: (01) 6663362, Fax: (01) 6663314
Email: crime_prevention@garda.ie

An Garda Síochána
www.garda.ie

The National Standards Authority of Ireland
www.nsai.ie

Secured by Design
www.securedbydesign.com

The Associated Locksmiths of Ireland
www.aloi.net

The Master Locksmiths Association
www.masterlocksmiths.co.uk