

MY HOME OR BUSINESS HAS BEEN BURGLARIZED, WHAT DO I DO NOW?

No amount of crime prevention is a 100 percent guarantee that criminals will not steal from your home, outbuildings, or business.

If you return to your home or business to find broken glass, scattered possessions, open windows, or muddy footprints, you may be the victim of a burglary.

**IF YOU ARRIVE AT YOUR
HOME OR BUSINESS AND
DISCOVER THAT YOU HAVE
BEEN BURGLARIZED,
DO NOT ENTER.**

**THE INTRUDER MAY STILL BE
ON THE PREMISES.**

**YOU SHOULD RETREAT TO
YOUR VEHICLE AND LEAVE
THE AREA IMMEDIATELY.**



Call your local law enforcement agency and let the responding officers or deputies search your property to ensure that no suspects are still inside.

Once it is safe to enter your property, look around thoroughly, but do not touch anything because you may disturb or destroy fingerprints or other evidence. Do inform police of:

- ⇒ Any missing items, especially if you have engraved them with personalized information.
- ⇒ Any item that looks as though it was touched or moved from its normal position. It may have fingerprints.
- ⇒ Items that do not belong to you that may have been left behind by the suspect. Thieves have been known to leave behind personal items such as clothing, tools, and even driver's licenses or other personal identification.

Once law enforcement has cleared the scene, there are some things you need to do within the first 24 hours.

- ⇒ Call your insurance company and report your losses. You will need to have a complete list of your belongings, preferably with photos.
- ⇒ Contact your bank and be prepared to dispute any charges made in your name.

- ⇒ Contact the credit agencies and request a security alert. This will prevent anyone from opening up an account in your name. Carefully review your credit reports and be ready to contest any fraudulent activity.

There is something you can do right now to make things easier in the event that you are targeted by a burglar. Keep a record of all of your valuables that includes the make, model, and serial number and any identifying information. If the item does not have a serial or other identifying number, consider engraving your driver's license number (not your social security number) or other personal mark on the items. Take photographs of your belongings and keep the photographs with your record of valuables.

If you have this record, law enforcement may have an easier time tracking down your valuables and you will have proof of ownership to aid in having your property returned to you.

Another benefit of this record is to provide the information to your insurance company so you can obtain the proper coverages for your belongings, and receive recompense for them if they are taken.

You can use the example in the next column as a guide to follow.