

How to reinforce door locks

4/11/2013 2:18:59 PM

EXTRACT

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According to claims data from a variety of carriers, including rural insurance providers, the risk of home theft increases when the temperatures warm. Many people are aware of this, and as a result, go to various lengths to ensure that their homes are protected. Some of the ways they do this is by purchasing security alarms, not broadcasting the fact that their leaving on vacation and only telling a select number of close friends about their plans.

Yet far and away, the most common way in which homeowners will secure their home is by locking all the doors and windows.

The following tips should provide homeowners with an idea of whether their current locks are sufficient and how to make them more effective.

Basic locks types: spring latch and dead bolt

Though professional locksmiths can likely provide homeowners with a wide array of lock types, there are generally two classifications of locks - spring latch and dead bolt. Spring latch locks - which are also known as slip bolt - are very basic and provide a fairly limited degree of security. They work by manipulating the door knob, such as by pressing a button or turning a lever in the center of the knob, which impacts the spring-loaded latch that located in the door frame.

But home security experts say that these locks can be overridden. Because the bolt isn't extremely sturdy, intruders may be able to break through it by smashing the doorknob with a wrench or hammer. They may also be able to ram through the door if they have a lot of mass behind them.

Fortunately, these locks can be made stronger with some reinforcement. Experts recommend installing a metal plate that surrounds the doorknob, giving it added strength. If homeowners are unsure of how to do this, they should get in touch with a locksmith or home improvement company.

The other type of lock is the dead bolt, which is usually above the doorknob and slides into place manually when turned. The only way to do this is if inside the home turning the knob or with a key from outside.

However, similar to the spring latch, intruders can get through a dead bolt if they have the capacity to pry the door apart from the jamb.

This issue can be ameliorated by installing a vertical dead bolt rather than a horizontal one. These vertical dead bolts are also referred to as "surface-mounted." Home improvement retailers should have more information on these.

Homeowners may also want to consider reviewing Consumer Reports magazine. They frequently will have articles that test various door locks, testing to see if they can withstand lock-picking attempts.

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