

# HOW TO HELP SECURE YOUR HOME

Village Green  
Los Angeles, CA  
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Dear Village Green Residents,

Although the Village Green community experiences considerably less crime than the immediately surrounding area, enough residents suffer the economic and emotional loss from crimes each year to necessitate taking steps to reduce them. Although Platt Securities greatly helps to deter crime incidences, each of us can take simple steps to better secure our homes and cars.

The Safety Committee created this guide to help the residents at Village Green reduce crimes involving their property. The guide includes basic yet valuable suggestions, but we encourage you to do your own research and to make your own choices depending on perceived risk, time, and costs. If you would like to conduct further research or are looking for security vendors, we have included some resources at the end of this document that we found helpful.

One of the primary lessons in this guide is to implement many overlapping layers of deterrence so that if one layer fails, the next one will kick in. Using multiple layers of deterrence will greatly increase your odds that criminals will move on to an easier target. We hope that this guide is helpful to you and if you have any questions or comments, please direct them to the Safety Committee.

All the best,

The Safety Committee  
Village Green

# SECURE YOUR HOME IN 10 STEPS

## **Step 1: Deadbolt your doors.**

Bottom locks can be picked or forced. A common spring-latch lock can be easily picked with a flexible piece of plastic and non-dead bolted doors can be forced or kicked in. So, deadbolt your doors when you are away. To discourage "grab and dash" crime, lock your door when you take out the trash or check your laundry and, if you have one, ask your cleaning service to do the same.

## **Step 2: Close and lock all windows.**

When you are away, close and lock all windows with the handles pointed down to 90 degrees. You might need to scrape some paint under the window latch so that the handle can close completely. Thieves are more likely to target windows that they think they might be able to "jimmy" open. Many residents with second stories assume that they are less at risk but thieves can climb structures (such as door overhangs, railings, posts, trees, and balconies) and force entry through 2<sup>nd</sup> story windows. Bars can be ripped out by anyone who can exert 100 lbs. of pressure with a crowbar or pipe, and at most, will only slow a thief down by 15 minutes.

## **Step 3: Turn on your patio lights.**

Have your front and back patio lights on from dusk to dawn. This will allow for neighbors, Platt, and LAPD to more easily see potential criminals as well as reduce the number of dark places a criminal could hide.

## **Step 4: Use a home alarm system.**

Monitored Home security systems (such as Brinks, ADT, Guardian, etc.) reduce the chance that your residence will be burglarized by two to three times. Over 60% of burglaries are forced entry (ie: even if your doors and windows are locked, they'll find a way in), so getting an alarm is an extremely important part of your defenses. An alarm usually will scare off the suspect and will also warn your neighbors and Platt that there might be an intruder. Both upper and lower units should consider getting an alarm, as thieves can climb structures and force entry through 2<sup>nd</sup> story windows. Please refer to "Questions Neighbors have Considered" at the end of this document for evaluating home alarm systems.

### **Step 5: Have easy access to safety telephone numbers.**

Each moment that passes during a suspected crime is one that could have been used to prevent it from happening or escalating. Keep safety telephone numbers in your phones' memory so that you can immediately contact LAPD, Platt Securities, and your neighbors. Here they are:

LAPD: **911** (for emergency or life threatening issues) or LAPD's dispatch  
**(877) 275-5273** (for non-emergency or informational issues)  
Platt Securities: **(800) 986-3868**.

### **Step 6: Create a "lived in" look when you are away.**

When you are away, you can take steps to make it look like you are still home. Consider using plug-in devices that will automatically turn on your lights (the devices that turn on lights at random times in the evenings are best) or a radio. Arrange for your newspapers and mail to be placed on hold by filling out a form at the post office or online (at <https://dunsapp.usps.gov/HoldMail.jsp>). Ask a neighbor that you trust to help keep an eye on your place.

### **Step 7: Keep your car empty and consider a car alarm.**

Don't leave anything in sight in your car including cell phones, portable stereo systems, or sunglasses. Remind your friends who visit to not leave anything visible in their car, especially if they are staying overnight. Consider obtaining an alarm system or other security system for your car. Both factory-installed and "after market" alarm systems are available with the most secure including a "kill switch" which prevents your car engine from being started. Be sure to verify what level of protection your car has.....don't make assumptions.

### **Step 8: Insure and document your belongings.**

If all else fails, insurance can provide another layer of protection. The Association's insurance policy does not cover theft of personal property so homeowners should strongly consider maintaining theft coverage and renters should arrange for their own coverage since they are not covered by their landlord's policy. Establishing proof of ownership of your belongings is critical. Many insurance companies require original receipts or credit card copies as proof of purchase. Take pictures of your possessions (it's best to take close ups and ones with you in the picture) once a year and keep the UPC code and serial number of expensive items (such as TV's, computers, and cameras) for police tracking. Keep up-to-date copies of important documents (such as birth certificates, medical records, or passports) and backups of computer data *off site* (like at an online storage company or other physical location, such as with a friend). Please refer to "Questions Neighbors have Considered" at the end of this document for tips for evaluating insurance policies.

**Step 9: Submit work orders for areas where a criminal can hide.**

Report dark or overgrown landscaped areas that block sightlines or create easy areas for criminals to hide. If you see one of these areas, please fill out a work order (available in the laundry room), write on the top of it "Safety", and suggest how it might be taken care of (such as thinned or pruned back).

**Step 10: Join Neighborhood Watch.**

Participating in Neighborhood Watch is one of the most effective ways you can protect your home and car. Participation simply means that you will get to know your neighbors by attending potlucks and will report any suspicious criminal activity or crimes to LAPD, Platt, and potential victims. In return, your neighbors will do the same for you. It's simple, free and builds community! To find out who is leading Neighborhood Watch in your court, please contact the Chair of the Safety Committee or your Court Council Representative.

If you have any further thoughts or suggestions about safety at Village Green, we would greatly value your input at Safety Committee meetings. Meetings are held once a month at the Clubhouse. Please check with the office to verify current meeting times before attending your first meeting.

# Resources

This guide is a good starting point for resources and vendors that friends and neighbors here at the Village Green have done business with and recommend. We encourage you to do your own research and speak with your friends, neighbors, and Court Captain for additional updates and references.

## Weblinks

Village Green information:

<http://www.villagegreenla.net/>

LAPD crime stats, maps, and information:

[http://www.lapdonline.org/crime\\_maps\\_and\\_compstat](http://www.lapdonline.org/crime_maps_and_compstat)

Burglary Prevention Council:

<http://www.burglaryprevention.org/>

Unites States Postal Service vacation holds:

<https://dunsapp.usps.gov/HoldMail.jsp>

## Vendors

Locksmiths: Evan's Locksmith Service, 24 hours/7 days (310) 677-7070  
Jefferson Lock and Key (323) 731-1181

Home Security Systems: Brinks, ADT

Insurance Companies: Allstate, USAA, State Farm, Mercury, AAA, and Farmers

Car Alarm Installers: Stereo City, Culver City (310) 838-111

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## Questions Neighbors have Considered

### Home Security System

1. On choosing a company: How long have they been in business? What is their consumer rating? Have they won any excellence awards? Who do other neighbors or friends recommend?
2. Will they come over to do a demo, free of charge?
3. Can they customize a system to fit your needs?
4. Ask for at least two sign posts to stake at your front and back door. Thieves will look on both sides, so let them know your unit is armed. Remember to also place the alarm company's decals in your windows.
5. If you are a renter, obtain permission from your landlord for installation, but then find out if the vendor will move with you for free if you ever move....some do!
6. You will have an "alarm tree" of the numbers your vendor will call if an alarm event happens. In addition to your home, work, or cell numbers, consider having at least one number be a neighbor in your Court who is normally home when you aren't. That way, if an alarm is tripped, you will have some help on site. You might consider adding Platt as the last number (800.986.3868) in the event that either you or your neighbor(s) cannot be reached. Although Platt cannot be responsible for securing your unit or guarding it until you arrive on scene, they can survey the exterior of the unit and surrounding area and assist either LAPD or your home security company in locating your unit. Upon receipt of a call from your vendor, Platt's on-site personnel will attempt to reach your unit as soon as possible, but Platt's response time may vary depending upon other emergencies occurring at the Association at such time.

### Insurance

1. Discuss with your insurance representative deductibles, overall coverage amount, exactly what is covered and what is not, and what caps are in place. For example, you may have a \$37,000 policy, but there may be caps on certain items, such as \$200 for cash, \$1,000 for jewelry, and \$5,000 for computers. If you have specialty possessions, you may need to discuss getting a "rider" for additional coverage. Look at the fine print to pick the policy that is right for you.
2. Discuss what the company requires for proof of ownership.

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