

# Fraternity House Security

## Steps you can take to make your property more secure

While nothing will substitute for common sense, using eyes and ears to focus on surroundings and being your brother's keeper, there are some things to do to facilitate safety and security in your chapter houses

- ✓ Make sure all window locks and door locks latch securely. Inspect locks regularly.
- ✓ Never allow doors to be propped open. Consider alarms that would sound if doors are left open for more than a defined time or if first floor windows are opened.
- ✓ Evaluate your lock/access: key, ID card swipe, keypad, key fob, biometric lock. These measures work only to the degree that the residents observe the rules. Don't loan keys/cards/fobs to anyone, don't share a combination (combinations should be changed on a regular basis), don't prop doors open.
- ✓ Make sure that the front door has a peephole, and hold regular discussions regarding whom to allow access to the house as well as preventing non-residents from following a resident into the facility.
- ✓ Consider installation of a buzzer/intercom system.
- ✓ Include security checks in regular property inspections.
- ✓ Chapter officers/advisors should review chapter security/member security on a monthly basis during chapter meetings.
- ✓ Make sure that landscaping does not interfere with the security of the property. Keep bushes and trees trimmed.
- ✓ Use outside security lights to illuminate every access door, and make sure that burned out bulbs are replaced promptly.
- ✓ Install stops that prevent windows from being opened more than 6 inches. However, everyone in the residence needs to know how to remove the stops to make an emergency exit.

## DOOR/LOCK RECOMMENDATIONS

- Use solid core or metal doors that are secured with good quality deadbolt locks. Look for or ask the locksmith for door locks with an ANSI grade 1 rating. Deadbolt locks should have a horizontal bolt at least 1 inch long. With shorter bolts, a burglar can more easily use tools to spread the door frame and open the door.
- Consider using locks that have an internal anti-saw pin that makes it difficult for a thief to saw through the bolt with a hacksaw. Also, some locks come with an anti-drill feature using hardened steel chips inside the lock that will destroy a drill bit in case a burglar tries to drill through the lock.
- The casing, which is the outside housing of the lock, should be made out of hardened steel and be beveled. A hardened steel casing makes the lock more resistant to impact, and the beveling helps prevent a burglar from using a pipe wrench to twist the lock free.
- A metal strike plate is attached to the door jamb to hold the bolt or latch in place. The most common way for a thief to force a door open is to kick it open by kicking at the plate. You can make this harder by using a heavy four-screw high security strike plate. The wood screws used to attach it should be 3 inches long. That way, they will go through the jamb and be anchored in the door frame stud.
- Using at least one long screw in attaching each door hinge will further secure the door against forced entry.

## SECURITY CAMERAS

There are really three issues to consider when you look at security cameras:

- Will the cameras enhance security?
- Are you being sensitive to privacy concerns?
- Will it affect the relationship between the undergraduate chapter and the house corporation?

Installation of cameras won't affect your insurance coverage or premiums either positively or negatively. We recommend that they only be placed in very public spaces: outside the building and in lobby areas. Cameras can be placed in other public interior spaces, but in some cases the chapter members are sensitive to being "spied on" when cameras are used more widely. We don't have recommendations for vendors; many clients who have installed cameras have worked with their existing alarm companies to enhance the service with security cameras.