

Crime Prevention Newsletter

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Light Timers – An Important Home Security Tool

When attempting to make your home more secure against burglars, purchasing a light timer may not be your top priority. However, purchasing a light timer is an inexpensive and effective way to increase the security in your home.

What is a Light Timer?

A light timer is a small device that can be programmed to automatically turn specific lights on or off at a certain time. These devices come in a variety of types, which may include specialized features. Most light timers are socket-located timers, as they include a special plug which switches devices plugged into its outlet on or off at a specific time.

How Does a Light Timer Work?

At a specific time, a socket-located light timer will switch off the electric current that is being provided to the device which is plugged in to the socket. This time can be set by modifying the settings of the timer, as well as ensuring that it operates properly.

How Are Light Timers Used for Home Security?

By having a light timer, you can schedule the lights in your home to turn off and on at specific times. This means that even if you are not at home, your house will give the appearance of being occupied. A thief is less likely to target your home for a burglary if they witness the lights in your home being switched on or off. Some light timers even have a setting in which they can be used to time separate lights in your home to turn on and off at different times. Purchasing a high-quality light timer will usually cost you less than \$20, and can go a long way toward increasing your home's level of security.

What Are Some Other Uses for Light Timers?

Having a light timer set to a specific time can help ensure that no one in your home leaves an interior light (such as a bathroom light) on overnight, which will save you money on your electric bill. If you have small children, a light timer can be used if they are unable to fall asleep when it's dark (night phobia is common in some younger children). In addition to this, a light timer can be a great way to set your interior lights to turn on a short time before you return home on a late night. Coming home to a dark house can be intimidating, and having a light timer can make a huge difference.



National Do Not Call Registry

The National Do Not Call Registry gives you a choice about whether to receive telemarketing calls at home. Most telemarketers should not call your number once it has been on the registry for 31 days. You can register your home or mobile phone for free at the following address:

<https://www.donotcall.gov>

Reducing Junk Mail

Stop pre-approved credit card offers. The three major credit bureaus sell lists of individuals who meet certain credit criteria. To remove your name from the generated lists, call the "Opt Out" hotline for the three major credit bureaus Equifax, Experian, and Trans Union at: 1-888-5-OPT-OUT (1-888-567-8688) or "Opt Out" online at:

www.optoutprescreen.com

You may choose to "opt out" of such offers for five years or permanently. If you do choose to opt out," and decide that you want to receive such offers again, you can "opt in." You may also contact the three credit bureaus directly at:

Equifax Options
Marketing Decision Systems
P.O. Box 740123 Atlanta, GA 30374-0123

Experian
Attn: Consumer Services Dept.
901 West Bond Street Lincoln, NE 68521-3694

TransUnion
Name Removal Option
P.O. Box 505 Woodlyn, PA 19094-0505

"Opt Out" of mailing lists generated by companies with which you do business. Some companies that you do business with sell or trade your name and address unless you specifically request that your information be kept private. In some cases, when you order from a catalog or apply for a credit card, there will be a small box for you to check if you wish to "Opt Out" of its mailing distribution list. If you want to protect your privacy, you should tell companies you do business with not to sell your personal information.

How to Burglar-Proof Your Windows

Windows are a very common entry point for burglars. They are often left unlocked or even wide open. When closed and latched, windows can easily be shattered with a rock, brick or any other heavy object. There are several options available to help secure your windows.

- Laminated films can be placed over every window. The films bond with the glass to make them nearly impregnable. In addition, the film is clear so the window will remain completely transparent. A burglar won't even know the glass is protected until they try to break it.
- Some glass contains thick wires all throughout, making it both decorative and functional. Burglars will know right away that this will not be an easy window to get through. After breaking the glass, the wires will still be in the way, and would need to be cut before entry is possible. Criminals will most likely pass on a window like this because getting through them would be difficult and time consuming.
- Windows do not have to be made from glass. Plexiglass looks like the real thing, but is actually made out of a thick plastic. It is transparent so it gives the illusion of being a regular window, but burglars will find it is impossible to break.
- Some homes have windows that slide open on a track. Burglars may find it easy to gain access through these windows, so it is essential to secure them. By installing latches, such as those found in a "Casement Window" you can make them very difficult to open. You can also find bolts and locking pins for sliding windows, but burglars are often able to pry them open if they are determined to get in.

Ensuring your windows are burglar proof is an essential task for every home owner, but it is important to remember that you may need to use the windows as an escape route during a fire or other emergency. Make sure you have the ability to get out through a window if it becomes necessary to do so.



"Some companies that you do business with sell or trade your name and address unless you specifically request that your information be kept private."



Home Security Checklist

As we roll into the changing leaves of autumn, very soon we will find ourselves planning trips for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday season. The Lancaster City Police Department would like to remind residents to practice good home security habits. Here is a quick and easy checklist to assist you in developing these good habits:

- Do you lock up? Double check that ALL doors and windows are locked tight before leaving your home.
- Do the exterior lights illuminate your home well?
- Are the shrubs trimmed by the windows and doors?
- Are garage doors closed AND locked when not in use?
- Do you report suspicious activity or persons to the police immediately?
- Do you lock up your tools and ladders and make sure they are not laying out in the yard for burglars to use?
- Do you have heavy duty strike plates mounted on exterior door frames?
- Does your deadbolt extend at least one inch?
- Is your house number displayed in such a way that it is visible from the street both day and night?
- Most importantly, do you know a neighbor or two? This is important so that if you are out of town someone can look over your home. Go out and introduce yourself to your neighbors or get involved in your neighborhood watch group!



Prevent Theft from Auto

Thieves target vehicles with ANY personal items visible inside, including personal electronics, checkbooks, credit cards, CDs, spare change, etc...

Follow these tips to help reduce the chance of becoming a victim:

- Always lock your vehicle.
- Never leave personal items in your car.
- If you must leave valuables in your car, lock them in the trunk, glove compartment, or center console before arriving at your destination.
- Look around before you get out of your car. Be aware of surroundings. Report any suspicious activity immediately to the police.
- Do not leave your car running.
- Lock your garage. Unlocked cars in unlocked garages are also targets of auto theft.
- If you use an underground garage, wait for the door to close before driving away, so unwanted guests cannot enter.

Scam Catch Phrases

Whether it's an infomercial or a mailing, look for the following phrases when it comes to money-making opportunities. Many lure you into what looks good on its face but ends up a scam.

- Cash only. *Once you hand over cash, it's gone forever.*
- Secret Plans or Keep This Between You and I. *Secret may equate to illegal. Definitely requires follow up and further investigation.*
- Earn big money fast regardless of your training or experience. **ALWAYS INVESTIGATE!!** *Conduct an internet search or contact the Better Business Bureau.*
- "It's a sure thing" *Nothing is ever a sure thing.*
- It worked for me, it will work for you. *Results for one person are never guaranteed for another. This statement lures you into a sense of false hope.*
- Enter our contest today! *Normally a come-on to draw you into a money-losing scheme.*
- Today Only, Last Chance, or Limited Offer. *Be wary of any program that requires you to act quickly with little time to think or investigate.*
- Too Good to be True. *In most cases it is.*



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**The mission of the Lancaster
City Police Department is to
provide outstanding service with
professionalism and integrity.**

We're on the Web!

www.lancasterpolice.com

"Like" us on Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com/LancCityPD>

Follow us on Twitter at
LancasterPolice

GUN SAFETY

Gun Safety is the responsibility of every adult, whether or not you own a firearm. If you own a firearm and obtain a concealed weapons permit, you need to be aware of "Pistol Free" zones in Pennsylvania. For example, it is illegal to carry a pistol on school property.

As an adult, you are responsible for properly securing your firearm. If another person is injured as a result of your negligence in properly securing a gun, you can be charged with a crime or be held civilly liable. If convicted, you could be fined or sentenced to time in prison.

What your children need to know

Children should know that guns are not toys, that guns are dangerous and can hurt people. If they see or find a gun (even if they think the gun looks like a toy), they should follow these three steps to safety:

1. They should not touch or handle the gun.
2. They should get away from the gun quickly, leave the area.
3. They should immediately tell a trusted adult (parent, guardian, teacher or police officer) about the gun.

Don't Lose Out on a "Golden" Opportunity

As of this writing, the cost of gold was \$1,753 per ounce and the price of gold is sure to rise to record levels. Everywhere you go you can't help but see signs advertising "Highest Price for Gold," "We Buy Gold" and "Sell Your Gold Here." As a result, buyers of gold, many from out of town, have set up in local motels for weekend gold buying sessions. Before you surrender your gold to a dealer be aware of the following tips:

- Ask the dealer if they are currently licensed by the county sheriff in the county where they are operating.
- Ask them where the current price of gold is posted.
- If they are going to weigh your gold, make sure the scale is visible so you can observe the operation. Also make sure the scale bears a current seal of approval from weights and measures.
- Be aware of the metric and troy systems of measure. A conversion chart is required to be posted.
- Make sure you will receive a complete and descriptive receipt. It must contain the name and age of the seller and an accurate description of the item and weight.

*If none of these things are posted or available...**walk away!***

Some additional tips:

- All items received by a dealer shall be kept in "unaltered condition" for a minimum of 5 days and available for inspection.
- If possible, have your items weighed and examined by a reputable jeweler to establish a baseline weight and value.
- **NEVER** send gold through the mail for evaluation. You have no idea who will receive it and it may be difficult to prove what you sent. This is an all-around bad idea.

