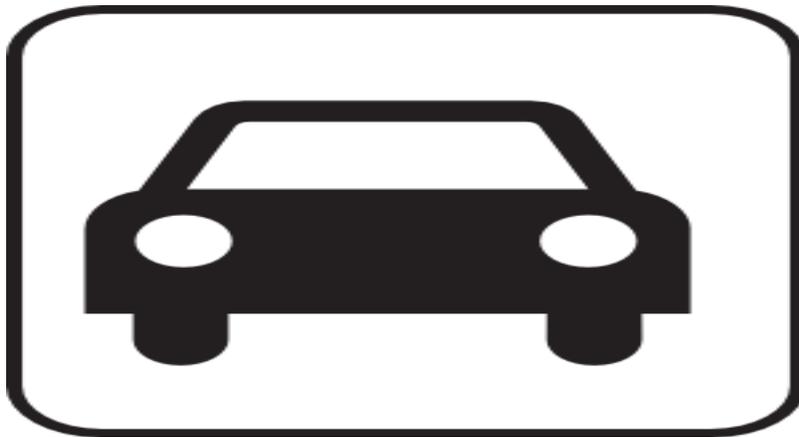


# SUMMERVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

## A Guide to Home and Vehicle Security



Summerville Police Department  
300 West 2<sup>nd</sup> North Street  
Summerville, SC 29483  
843-871-2463





## SUMMERVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

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**BRUCE E. OWENS**  
CHIEF OF POLICE



Dear Citizens of Summerville,

On behalf of the men and women of the Summerville Police Department and as your Chief of Police, I would like to thank each of you for your support and willingness to help us keep you, your family, property, and belongings safe and protected. It is our intent as a premier law enforcement agency to provide the highest level of service available, however; we are only as strong as our weakest link and we need all of the interaction between us and our citizenry in order to effectively achieve this goal to help make this the safest community in South Carolina.

I am asking your help to please be a good neighbor by being conscientious and report any suspicious activity to police immediately. If someone or something looks out of place, contact the Summerville Police Department on our non-emergency phone number, 843-875-1650 and we will dispatch an officer to your area to investigate. Obviously, if you encounter what you perceive to be an emergency, please dial 9-1-1. There is no such thing as a “nosey neighbor,” only a good neighbor.

We have prepared this citizen guideline or “cheat sheet,” we are calling, *A Guide to Home and Vehicle Security*, for each of you to read and evaluate, and in some cases reevaluate your home and vehicle security when possible. Our *A Guide to Home and Vehicle Security* includes a quick survey and a robust guide of tips and ideas to implement. Though the guide we created will not solve crime, it will certainly encourage and help you take safe, pro-active measures to deter and in many cases, help prevent crime and to avoid you or your family from becoming the next potential victim.



## SUMMERVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

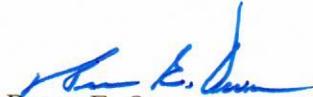
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**BRUCE E. OWENS**  
CHIEF OF POLICE



In closing, my officers and I are proud to serve you and we consider it an honor and a privilege to be a part of such a wonderful, caring, and supportive community who values our work and dedication to service. If we can ever be of assistance, please feel free to contact any Summerville police officer or me.

Proudly serving you,



Bruce E. Owens

# Conduct Our Security Survey

## Check out your home from the burglar's point of view:

- YES NO** Are all exterior doors (including basement and garage) strong enough to withstand excessive force?
- YES NO** Are all strike plates and frames for each door strong enough to withstand excessive force?
- YES NO** Is there a wide-angle viewer on all entrances?
- YES NO** Are sliding glass doors and windows secure?
- YES NO** Are all entrances lighted at night?
- YES NO** Are all your locks in good repair?
- YES NO** Have you changed locks since you moved into your residence?
- YES NO** Are windows secured with pins or locks?
- YES NO** Do casement windows work properly?
- YES NO** Can all bars/locks be removed in case of fire?
- YES NO** Are garage doors secured with padlock or hasp?
- YES NO** Do you lock your garage door at night?
- YES NO** Do you lock your car in that garage?
- YES NO** Do you cover and lock garage windows?
- YES NO** Are trees and shrubs kept trimmed?
- YES NO** Is your address posted clearly and visible at night and day?
- YES NO** Are lights installed around perimeter?
- YES NO** Have you locked up your ladders and made sure trellises and drain pipes can't be used as ladders?

## HOW DID YOU DO?

# TIPS TO HELP KEEP YOU SAFE

## Doors and Locks

The most common ways of forcing entry through a door is by kicking in the door, twisting off the doorknob, or prying the door open. Some of the following prevention measures can discourage a burglar from entering your home.

**Outside Doors:** These should be metal that's 28-gauge thick or solid hardwood at least 1 3/4 inches thick.

**Locks:** The best locks are deadbolt locks with a minimum 1-inch throw bolt. When buying locks, check to make sure they have all metal parts with steel bolts to hold the lock together.

**Padlocks:** Look for sturdy padlocks that don't release the key until the padlock is locked. This ensures you'll never leave a padlock unlocked.

Remember that a padlock is only as good as the hasp it is mounted on. The hasp should be secured with bolts and mounted on a metal plate. Be sure bolts are concealed when the padlock is locked. In addition, make sure the padlock is case-hardened with a 3/8-inch shackle so it can resist repeated blows. Overhead garage doors can be secured with a

padlock on the inside track above the wheel. Outward swinging garage doors can usually use a good hasp and padlock.

**Strike Plate:** The strike plate must be attached to the door frame with screws that measure at least 3 inches to ensure they fasten securely into the double two-by-four behind the door frame. This helps to prevent the door from being kicked in. Never rely on a chain lock as a security device.

**Door Frames:** Doors and locks can still be defeated if there is an empty space between the door jamb and the 2 x 4 stud of the door frame. When this occurs, thin door jambs can be pushed or pulled far enough to expose the bolt and open the door.

Look through the hole on the jamb that was drilled to receive the lock bolt. If there is a space wider than 1/2 inches between the jamb and the 2 x 4, remove the inside molding and fill the space with wood 12 inches above and below the bolt hole. Then, secure with long screws. In addition, check for spaces on the hinge side across from the bolt and repeat the process if needed.

**Hinges:** Doors should open inward to hide the hinges, preventing a burglar from removing the pin and lifting the door off its hinges. Door hinges are usually secured with short 1/2-inch screws, which are too short to adequately secure them. To help prevent the hinges from being kicked out of the door jamb, replace the short screws with some that are at least 3 inches long, so that they will be anchored to the 2 x 4 of the door frame.

Doors that swing open to the outside are particularly vulnerable to forced entry. The pins could be removed from the exposed hinges, and then the door could simply be lifted out. One solution is that these hinges could be replaced with ones manufactured with non-removable pins. The existing hinges may also be protected by removing two screws that are opposite each other from both.

It is also helpful to wedge the sliding door with a swinging metal rod (a Charlie bar) to prevent entry even if the lock is picked or broken. A wooden rod (a broomstick, for example) wedged against the door may work as well.

## Windows

**Sliding Windows:** Track locks from the hardware store can be effective as well as Charlie bars or wooden doweling to wedge windows tight. Metal pins or nails can be inserted into a small hole drilled into both frames. Screws installed in the upper track will prevent windows from being lifted up and out of their tracks.

**Double-Hung Sash Windows:** Pin wooden windows by drilling a downward sloping hole through the top of the bottom sash and into the bottom of the top sash. Then insert a pin or nail. A second hole may be drilled to allow the window to open a couple inches to allow ventilation but remain secure. Plastic windows should have anchoring devices that slide into the side of the window frame.

**Louvered, Multi-Panel, Casement Windows:** Installing ornamental grillwork or bars are best. Use cane bolt locks or other pinning devices, and remove opening cranks.

## **Lighting**

Lighting may be one of the best deterrents to crime. Burglars prefer the cover of darkness when they are burglarizing a home. Leave outside lights on during the nighttime. Light up each outside door or porch every night, and don't come home to a dark house.

Do not leave outside lights on during the day. This tells others you are not home. Electric timers can be of help in switching lights on and off at certain times of the day.

**Yard Lights:** Floodlights are useful in lighting up yards, driveways and garages. When installing, make certain the area the floodlight illuminates is not disturbing to neighbors. Sometimes, several neighbors can get together and purchase a light for common areas, such as an alley or backyard. Motion detectors in low traffic areas can alert the resident and neighbors that someone is in the area.

In planning your lighting, remember that the lighting you install on your property will not only aid you in detecting unwanted persons, but should also allow your neighbors to easily see someone prowling around your home.

## **Landscaping**

Trim shrubs around your house to prevent a place for concealment by burglars. Trim trees up approximately 4 feet so that your front door and windows are visible. Check to see if your house is free of obstructions from bushes and trees, and can be clearly seen from across the street.

Around vulnerable first-floor windows plant low, thorny bushes to ward off would be burglars. Also, installing gravel paths under windows can be an effective noise producing strategy.

## **Fencing**

Fences establish boundaries and offer privacy for the homeowner. However, they can also offer concealment for a burglar. Cyclone-type fencing offers less concealment. In addition, make sure gates are well-locked.

## **Marking your property**

Mark your valuables with an engraver. Marking your property with your driver's license number serves as a deterrent to burglars and it helps police in identifying and returning stolen property. Marked items are often not taken because they are difficult to pawn, fence or sell. To engrave, mark your property with the letters "SC" then your driver's license number followed by the letters "DL." Do not use your social security number. Using other identification numbers makes it difficult to trace ownership.

Be careful when marking electronic equipment. It is safer to use an etching device sold at craft stores. Make a property identification list, and take photos or a video of your possessions. Keep two copies of this record – one in your home and one in a safe deposit box or a relative's home in case of fire.

## **Alarms**

Installing an alarm can be a good investment, especially if you have many valuables in your home, live in an isolated area or one with a history of break-ins. Let your neighbors know about your alarm. Ask them to be alert to possible break-ins if your alarm is activated and have them call the police, if necessary.

Give your alarm code or number to a trusted neighbor or a relative living in the area so they can get it turned off once your home is found to be secure. This will save you from irritating your neighbors with a false alarm ringing all night long should you be away and unavailable. Learn how to use your system; numerous false alarms will cause neighbors to stop paying attention. In addition, you'll be fined.

There are many different types of alarms; check with reputable companies to determine the alarm best suited to your needs. Some things to consider when inquiring about a system:

- Backup in case of power failure.
- Fire-sensing capability.
- Read-out ability to check system in case of problems.
- Audible bell versus silent monitoring by a security company.
- Is your main concern for your safety while you are inside your house or when you are away?

For more detailed information about potential false alarm fees, please contact Lieutenant Richard Peebles at 843-871-2463.

## **Vacation**

When you are away from home for extended periods, the best security procedures will include making your residence appear occupied. A neighbor or friend watching the house, opening and closing curtains, etc., is the preferable choice, but there are other things you can do to make your house less of a target:

- Use timers on several lights such as living room and bedrooms.
- Use a timer on a stereo. TV stations are picked up on FM band. To someone outside, it sounds as if the TV is on.
- Leave curtains open just a little so a neighbor or the police can see if someone is in the house, but not open enough for a potential burglar to watch for any signs of occupancy.
- Ask a neighbor to park one of their cars in your driveway occasionally.
- Stop your mail and newspaper deliveries or ask a trusted friend or neighbor to pick them up as well as any circulars left on your door.
- Don't leave a message on your answering machine that indicates you are not home. Rather than saying "*I'm not at home right now,*" say, "*I'm not available right now.*"

## **Other tips**

- Let your neighbors know your schedule. You want them to know when no one is supposed to be hanging around your home.
- Make sure your house number is clear and easily read from the street. This helps emergency crews find your home quickly.
- Hide valuables. Don't leave them in obvious places; pick places that are easily accessible to you, but where burglars may not think about in the short time they are in your home.
- Don't hide keys under the mat or above the door—thieves know to look there first. Don't leave ladders or tools out in the yard. These kinds of petty crimes are popular because they are quick and easy.
- Consider getting a dog. Dogs can be a great deterrent; burglars would rather deal with a house without a barking dog.
- Don't put your name on your mailbox. The less information about you, the more difficult it is to find out your routine.
- When moving into a new residence, have the locks re-keyed.

**Other tips continued:**

- Do not put empty boxes which contained expensive merchandise such as computers or electronic equipment out for garbage collection without breaking them down. You don't need to advertise that you've just added these valuables to your home.
- Private security can be an excellent way to prevent and detect burglary problems. When selecting a contract security company, determine what meets your needs and what you can afford. Get at least three bids. Look for local companies who have performed service in your area. Check with their previous clients to determine if what they say is what they will do.
- Surveillance video equipment can be a valuable tool to help protect your home or business. Be sure to

**Be a good neighbor**

- Police officers don't know your neighborhood as well as you do. You and your neighbors are the ones who know what's going on in your neighborhood. If you spot something suspicious, call the police.
- Don't try to stop a criminal yourself. Get a good description of the suspect, vehicle and direction the suspect is headed. Then call 9-1-1.
- Form a Neighborhood Watch group. Call you're the Summerville Police Department for information and training on how to start and operate a Neighborhood Watch program at 843-871-2463, and they will get you in contact with your neighborhood coordinator. Neighbors working with the police are the most effective crime-fighting team.

# A guide to vehicle security

## The basic prevention policy

Never leave your car running or the keys in the ignition when you're away from it, even for "just a minute."

- Always roll up the windows and lock the car, even if it's in front of your home.
- Never leave valuables in plain view, even if your car is locked. Put them in the trunk or at least out of sight. If you buy stereo systems, be sure it is one which can be removed and locked in the trunk.
- Park in busy, well-lighted areas.
- Carry the registration and insurance card with you when you leave your vehicle. NOTE: Make sure you have these items with you when you return. Operating the vehicle without these documents is against the law.
- When paying to park in a lot or garage, leave just the ignition key with the attendant. Make sure no personal information is attached. Do the same when you take your car for repairs.

## Add extra protection

- Etch the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) on the windows, doors, fenders and truck lid. This helps discourage professional thieves who have to either remove or replace etched parts before selling the car. Copy the VIN and your tag number on a card and keep it in a safe place. If your vehicle is stolen, the police will need this information.
- Install a mechanical locking device – commonly called clubs, collars or j-bars – that locks to the steering wheel, column or brake to prevent the wheel from being turned more than a few degrees. Use it!
- Investigate security systems if you live in a high-theft area or drive an automobile that's an attractive target for thieves. You may get a discount on your auto insurance.

Another great deterrent to car prowls is parking under a street light. If there is a street light not functioning in your neighborhood, you can call the SCE&G to report the malfunctioning lamp at **800-251-7234**.

## **What about carjacking?**

Carjacking – stealing a car by force – has captured headlines in the last few years. Statistically, your chances of being a carjacking victim are very slim, and preventive actions can reduce the risk even more.

- Approach your car with the key in hand. Look around and inside before getting in.
- When driving, keep your car doors locked and windows rolled up at all times.
- Be especially alert at intersections, gas stations, ATMs, shopping malls, convenience and grocery stores – all are windows of opportunity for carjackers.
- Park in well-lighted areas with good visibility, close to walkways, stores and people.
- If the carjacker has a weapon, give up the car with no questions asked. Your life is worth more than a car.

## **Beware of the “bump and rob”**

It works like this: A car, usually with a driver and at least one passenger, rear-ends or “bumps” you in traffic. You get out to check the damage. The driver or one of the passengers jumps in your car and drives off.

If you’re bumped by another car, look around before you get out. Make sure there are other cars around, check out the car that has rear-ended you and who’s in it. If the situation makes you uneasy, stay in the car and insist on moving to a police station or busy, well-lighted area to exchange information.

## **Be on the lookout**

- If your car’s stolen, report it to the police immediately.
- When buying a used car from an individual or a dealer, make sure you have the proper titles, that the VIN number is intact, and the federal sticker is on the inside of the driver’s door. That sticker should match the VIN.
- Suggest that any dealer, rental car agency, or auto repair shop you use offer auto theft prevention information in the waiting rooms.

# Summerville Police Contact Numbers

## Police Emergency 9-1-1

**Summerville Police Department Non-Emergency** **843-871-2463**

Available 24 hours and answered by an automated attendant and will prompt you for various divisions within the department, as well as a call directory.

**Non-Emergency Line for Police Dispatch** **843-875-1650**

**Police Records Division** **843-871-2463**

Open Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

**Crime Stoppers Tip Line** **843-554-1111**

**Summerville Police Department Web site** **[www.summervillepolice.com](http://www.summervillepolice.com)**

