

Move-In Security Checklist: A Comprehensive Guide

A 4-Stage Protocol To Fortify Your New Home Before Unpacking Your First Box

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Moving into a new home can be chaotic. Between packing, moving, and unpacking, it's easy to lose track of crucial security steps. A dedicated move-in security checklist identifies your primary security concerns and outlines the steps needed to address them systemically. At Shield & Shelter, we divide the ideal move-in checklist into four distinctive stages:

Stage I: Cover Access Zones Before You Move In

- [] **1. Replace All Previous Locks & Access Codes:** The previous owner or contractors may still have copies. Rekey or replace cylinder deadbolts with ANSI Grade 1 hardware. Update digital smart locks and keypad codes immediately.
- [] **2. Test All Door Hinges & Strike Plates:** Reinforce door jamb strike plates with 3-inch hardened steel screws that bite deep into wall studs.
- [] **3. Verify Window Latches & Visibility:** Test all window sash locks. Trim exterior bushes and hedges so intruders cannot hide beneath ground-level windows.
- [] **4. Secure Garage & Connecting Doors:** Verify exterior garage door locks and the solid-core connecting door into the main house.
- [] **5. Inspect Hidden Entry Points:** Inspect crawlspace hatches, cellar storm doors, pet doors, and service access hatches.

Stage II: Secure The Perimeter & Place Sensors

- [] **6. Harden Wi-Fi Router & Create IoT VLAN:** Change default admin credentials, update firmware, and isolate smart cameras on a dedicated IoT network.
- [] **7. Enable Two-Factor Authentication (2FA):** Turn on 2FA for all security apps, hubs, and cloud accounts.
- [] **8. Place Relevant Motion Sensors:** Install motion sensors in transit corridors, garage interiors, and basement entrances.
- [] **9. Position Primary Security Cameras:** Cover main door, driveway, garage, and rear entrance using the 7-9 ft mounting height rule.
- [] **10. Ensure Balanced Exterior Lighting:** Install motion-activated floodlights around dark exterior corners and entrance pathways.

Stage III: Align Intruder Security With Life Safety

- [] **11. Test Smoke & Carbon Monoxide Detectors:** Install detectors inside every bedroom, outside sleeping areas, and on every floor level.
- [] **12. Establish Emergency Family Exit Routes:** Plan two egress routes from every room and designate an exterior family meeting point.

[] **13. Map Utility Shutoff Switches:** Ensure all adults know the exact location of the main water shutoff, electrical breaker panel, and gas valve.

[] **14. Create Accessible Emergency Contact Sheet:** Post local police, fire, poison control, and utility emergency numbers on the refrigerator.

Stage IV: Think Like An Intruder; Find & Fix Loopholes

[] **15. Perform a Nighttime Perimeter Walk:** Walk your property in the dark to spot lighting shadows, reflection glare, and blind spots.

[] **16. Audit Authorized Access Keys:** Maintain a strict list of physical key holders and avoid sharing generic digital pins.

[] **17. Revoke Temporary Contractor Codes:** Delete temporary pin codes given to movers, painters, and cleaning crews immediately.

[] **18. Practice Social Media Privacy:** Avoid posting identifiable exterior photos, address numbers, or moving schedules online.

Renter Security & Choosing The Ideal System

- **For Renters:** Request rekeying before move-in, verify window locks and peepholes, and utilize non-permanent, no-drill adhesive sensors.

- **System Selection:** Focus on coverage geometry rather than camera count. Ensure power backup (UPS) and secure local storage (NVR/NAS).

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