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## Is the outside of your home vulnerable to theft this summer?

*Security tips for safeguarding items stored in garages, sheds, and the backyard*

Almost 200,000 break-ins happen in Canada each year, according to Statistics Canada. Of those thefts, more than 21,000 take place in non-residential, non-commercial locations, which include sheds and detached garages. Summer can be high season for thieves, as valuable items like bicycles, ATVs, motorcycles, barbecues, and lawnmowers are brought out of storage and often left unattended during out-of-town weekends and vacations.

Most people take the necessary steps to ensure that their homes are protected from break-ins, but might pay less attention to protecting valuable items stored outside the house - in garages, storage sheds, or the backyard. Not only can the replacement cost of these items be significant, but police say that thieves may strike multiple times. Thieves may return, speculating that stolen items have been replaced but that security measures haven't been upgraded. To make matters worse, burglars often find tools or ladders stored outside that they will use to get into your home.

The majority of thieves and vandals will choose the easiest, fastest, and most vulnerable targets. A few simple precautions can keep property safe and secure regardless of where it's stored.

### Garages: Put the Brakes on Theft

• Locks that come with garage doors are often easily destroyed or pried open. Replace with a heavy-duty padlock, choosing one with an

octagonal boron-carbide shackle and a heavy steel or laminated body.

- For garages with overhead doors that roll up, install padlocks or bolts in the centre of the tracks, one-quarter inch above a roller with the door closed. This will prevent rollers from moving if the outer lock is tampered with.
- Ensure that the connecting door between the garage and your house is always locked.
- If you park in the driveway, don't leave your garage door opener remote in the car. Replace large remotes with a small keychain version to carry with you.



### Safeguard Storage Sheds and Outdoor Equipment

- Keep storage sheds locked - to prevent theft and to avoid giving thieves a place to hide.
- Secure bicycles, gas barbecues, lawn mowers, and snow blowers with a chain and padlock.
- Lock up tools, gardening implements, and ladders that thieves can use to break into your home.

### Install Gates and Fencing Wisely

- Beware a too-tall fence - while it provides privacy, it can also provide an opportunity for burglars to break in unseen and hide suspicious activity from neighbours and passers-by.
- Check for gaps where a thief could slide through or under.
- Make sure your gate is strong and securely installed, and lock it with a weather resistant type padlock.
- Keep the padlock locked, even when your gate is open. Thieves have been known to replace an open padlock with their own lock, then return to rob you.

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