



BURGLARY

A burglary occurs when the suspect enters a habitation or building without the effective consent of the owner with the intention of committing a felony, theft or assault. Burglary differs from robbery in that robbery involves intentional threat or physical harm caused to the victim by the suspect. (See Robbery)

Residential Burglary

A residential burglary can be very frightening and even traumatic for the victims of the crime. If you are the victim of a burglary, you may experience several feelings:

- Anger
- Frustration
- A sense of violation
- Suspicion
- Stress
- Shock
- Disbelief
- Fear that the suspect(s) will return to the home again
- Fears about being alone in your home

It is important to know that these reactions are normal and will often decrease with time. Some people with severe or long lasting reactions may benefit from counseling to help cope with trauma reactions. Sometimes victims feel as they should have done more to protect themselves and their loved ones. The truth is, you are in no way to blame-when someone else breaks the law it is not your fault.

What to do after a **burglary**?

- If you are frightened, get someone to stay at your home with you, or stay with a friend or family member for a night or two.
- Talking about the experience is a very good way to put your feelings in order. Family and friends can be a great support.
- Take enough time to complete any paperwork thoroughly. This may become important if you file a claim with your insurance.
- Consider becoming involved in a Neighborhood Watch Crime Prevention program — an excellent way to help safeguard your home.
- Monitor your bank and credit accounts in the event that personal information was taken. (See ID Theft and ID Fraud)

Home Safety Tips

- Make your house look occupied all of the time. Leave lights and a radio on when not home.
- Have a trusted neighbor pick up mail and newspaper when you are out of town.
- Install motion detector lights so they light all doors and windows.
- Remove shrubs from around the house, especially under windows. If you do have shrubs, plant those with thorns to deter potential intruders from hiding in them.
- Install a security system.
- Lock all doors and windows.
- Do not hide spare keys outside. Instead, give one to a trusted neighbor.

Children's Reactions

Remember that children may experience the same feelings as adults, and may have a hard time expressing their feelings in words. Their fear, anxiety, or anger may be expressed in changes in behavior. They may go back to earlier childhood behaviors, such as bed-wetting. Some children might become more aggressive and some might become quiet and withdrawn. All of these responses are normal reactions to stress. Children will often need special reassurance at this time. They may be frightened and need to know that their home can once again be a safe place. Encourage your children to talk about their feelings.

Commercial Burglary

A commercial burglary can be equally as traumatic as a residential burglary, especially when employees are present during the incident. Property owners and business employees are also likely to have reactions to a burglary, such as fear of returning to work or fear of being alone at work. Again, these reactions are normal. If your place of business is burglarized, talk to your employer about safety concerns and the possibility of shift changes to ensure no one works alone. It may be beneficial for the employee to utilize an Employees Assistance Program, if it is available. If none is available, Travis County Sheriff's Office Victim Services can provide crisis intervention and resource referrals. For further information, please contact TCSO Victim Services at (512) 854-9709.

What does the law say?

See: <http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us>

Code: Penal Code

Article/Chapter: Chapter 30. Burglary and Criminal Trespass

Art. /Sec.: Sec. 30.02. Burglary

Available Resources

If you believe you or your home or business has been burglarized, call 911.

First Call For Help (Capital Area United Way): Dial 211

www.211centraltexas.org

Provides callers with information and referral to non-profit agencies and participating businesses based on individual resource needs