

Bugging In - Securing your home Part 1

If you are like most preppers, you are planning on bugging out. A small percentage of the community is already in place and living the lifestyle that they will live once the fan turns brown. However, if you are like the rest of us, you are planning on moving to a more remote location once events start pointing towards the fact that its time to bust a move. This leaves the folks who are “Just prepared enough for a storm or small scale cataclysm.” These are the folks who are at least smart enough to listen to FEMA and have a months’ worth of food and water stored; they may even have some barter type items and a firearm or two. This group probably represents a much larger group of people than what we would consider “preppers”. These “pseudo-preppers” have no plan to bug out. They wouldn’t really know where to go even if they did leave their home, never mind what to do when they got there. This is not their fault really. They are just sheeple like the rest of us. They are smarter than the average sheep, but not as smart as the ones of the head of the flock. These people won’t have the option of bugging out for many reasons, but chiefly because by the time they realize help isn’t coming, things will have gotten so bad out in the world that travelling as an inexperienced family or group would be almost certain suicide. So, their only option will be limited to sheltering in place and going out and scavenging if and when they can. The problem comes in when you ask yourself, how safe am I inside my house? Go ahead and ask yourself? Sure you have probably went out and bought the best locks on the market and maybe you have a video system, but If someone wanted in, how hard would it be for them? We will look at two different scenarios in parts one and two of this article that deal with stopping intruder in the here and now everyday world we live in and of course, when society has become less functional.

The first thing we have to look at is entry points. These are the naturally weakest areas of your home. They are designed to allow for easily allowing people to come in or out. Namely these are your windows and doors. Statistically speaking these are the least secured areas in a person’s home, even though they have taken great pains to make sure that they are secure. Again, you the person reading this article are not to blame. You have been conditioned to live by your local social contract. It’s a bit different everywhere, but it exists in one way or another everywhere. Let’s take two American cities that I am intimately familiar with as examples. We will compare Charlotte, North Carolina with New Orleans, Louisiana. These two cities are roughly the same size and both have their unique cultures. In most places in Charlotte, you could leave your door open as a rule of thumb and you would rarely expect to get robbed. Sure, there are some places in Charlotte, where that would be a bad idea and where you would often get burglarized. Charlotte has its bad neighborhoods, very few, but they are there.

Now let’s look at New Orleans for a moment. Like Charlotte it has its bad areas, but then it has its worse areas as well. It also has a strange dynamic in that one of the most expensive places to live or own real estate in the city is one of its most dangerous and most likely to be burglarized. In the more upscale neighborhoods in

Charlotte crimes like burglary are pretty rare. In New Orleans, they are pretty common. Now, I don't do this to make Charlotte seem really safe or to make New Orleans seem really dangerous. (New Orleans is one of the most dangerous places in America!) I just draw the comparison because in order to really understand how safe you are depends on where you live. Crime will spread fast and just because you live 10 miles out of the center of the city doesn't mean much because resources will be needed every day by everyone in the area.

This brings us back to entry points and those expensive locks you bought for your doors and even windows and the social contract I mentioned before. The social contract is that most decent folk don't rape, kill, steal or otherwise act like knuckleheads. This is a great thing when everyone is playing by the rules, however once the rules fly out the window, the social contract will be right behind it. At that point, people will routinely burglarize and otherwise victimize people. That is just a fact of life and one that you need to get used to if you already aren't. Most of you reading this article know exactly what I mean, but there may be some who still don't understand how ugly the world will be for a time. I won't paint you a gloomy picture; it will never even come close to representing the reality anyway. What I will do is help you defend yourself better and make your home almost impenetrable to the casual intruder now and make it a less opportune target once things get bad. To do this I will include a couple of visual aids in the form of pictures. Most people with minimal skill will be able to install these safety precautions by themselves, but if you need a professional, there will be many in the area that will do it for a very nominal fee as it requires very little work. I will list the tools you need to get the job done and the approximate cost of the installation. Most of you will be able to secure your home against normal intruders for under \$150 if you do it yourself. In part two of this article, I will give you some options that will cost you less than \$500 to make a secure place in your home for when things go sideways that will be very hard to penetrate.

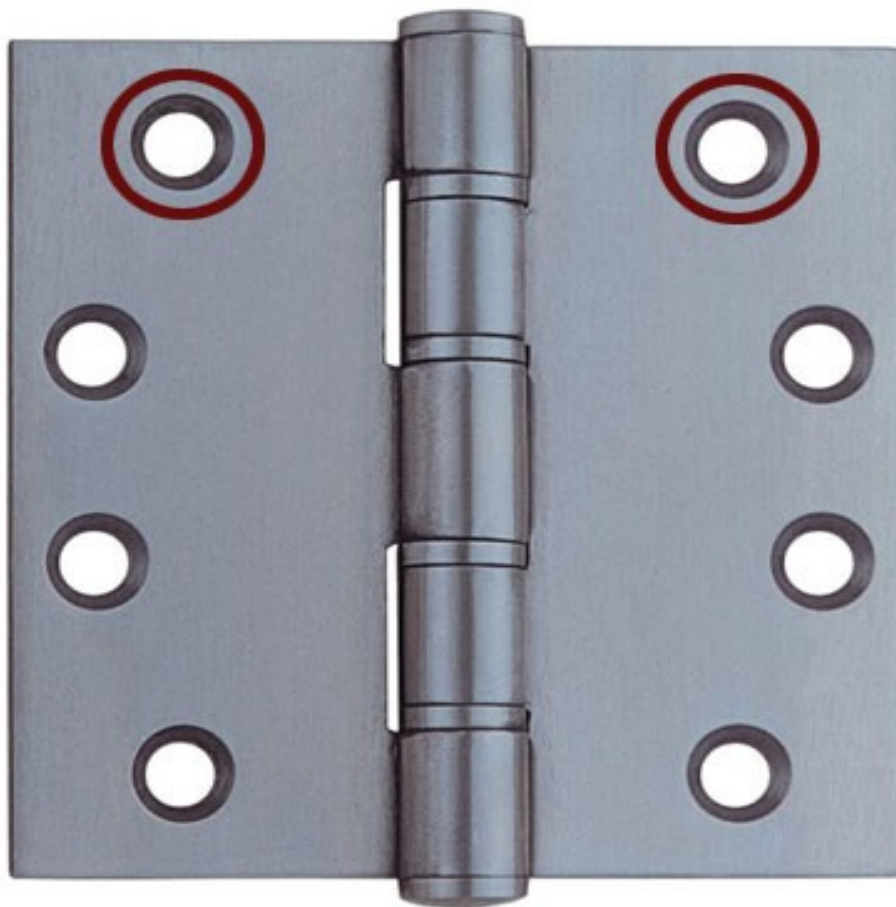
Doors

Doors are the number one point of entry for burglars and home owners alike. Even with your fancy lock, most doors can be kicked open by a 12 year old because that fancy lock relies on a ¾ inch of wood that it locks into to secure your home. Here's what you can do to make sure that your door is really going to keep out unwanted visitors. By using five six inch steel rods you can make your door almost impossible to kick in with no difference to its normal operation. As you can see from the illustration below they are inserted into the door going through the frame and into the framing of the house.

Hardened Doors Stop intruders cold



Be replacing the short screws that come with the door hinge with three inch long galvanized decking screws in three of the four spots, then drilling the fourth hole to one-quarter inch you can insert a piece of quarter inch steel rod in the fourth slot. (If your hinge only has three holes, drill a fourth where there is room and insert the rod there.) Try to make the slot for the rod in the center of the hinge, closest to the center of the framing of the house.



On the lock catch for **both** the **dead bold and the handle**, again replace the original screws with the three inch galvanized decking screws. On the catch you will want to use one the pre-drilled holes for your steel rod, so you will have to drill an additional screw hole at about three-eighths inch wide. Use the screw to the side allowing the rod to take one of the center positions.



Once you have the holes drilled and new longer screws installed, the door will already be three times safer than it was. Now, you add the steel rods. After drilling the one-quarter inch holes in the hardware, you will need a longer one quarter inch drill bit to drill six inches into the wall of the home. The one my company uses is about a 14 inch long drill bit , but you can use whatever you like. Just be sure that you have one that will be long enough to sink the steel rod and leave only about one-eighth of an inch outside the hole to catch the striker, catch and hinges and keep them from moving when force is applied.



You can see here I opted for two Steel rods on the striker plate and catch for the deadbolt as well as two galvanized decking screws to hold it in place. This customer, like me, believes in security overkill. On the inside hinge in the figure below you can see I added one extra hole at the top for the steel rod. This door had four inside hinges so we had four steel rods on the hinge side and four on the catch side with two in each catch for both the dead bolt and the handle striker. This door is very secure and would take a long time to kick in by a large sized man. Criminals being criminals are looking for the easiest pickings they can find and they do not like the sounds created by repeated kicking or breaking glass. In most cases they will usually move on on if they cannot kick in the door on the first couple tries.



Windows

There are literally hundreds of really good window locks out there that will prevent someone from jimmying open your window. Many of these I do not like because they take too long to remove if you have to open the window in a hurry. If there is a fire, the last thing you want to be doing is unscrewing a lock on your window, or worse remembering where you put the key to the window lock. My favorite type is the kind that uses a chain or spring to work. They allow you open the window as fast as you normally would in case of an emergency and they lock it just as tight as any of the other types. A good example is the one below.



Removes quickly and locks tight. It's a simple and effective solution, not to mention very affordable.

In the normal everyday life we live, I recommend one other product to fully ensure you are safe when you are at home. That is the floor-based door stopper. They come in many styles and again are affordable to purchase and can be installed with minimal experience, however if you need professional installation it won't cost you a lot to implement. The two door stoppers below are the ones I use and recommend to my customers. There are others just choose one you like and installation is fairly straightforward. You mount a holder in the floor, which you cut through with a paddle bit on a drill.

When you are home or do not need to use a particular door, you simply slide in the stopper and that door is virtually impenetrable without knocking it off its hinges. If you have installed the steel rods we mentioned above, it will take massive amounts of force to open this door with both systems in place.

This is the brass colored through-the-floor versions and I think I like it best because it puts a whole lot of steel all the way through your floor and it would take a tremendous amount of force to open a door that had one of these in place. Coupled with the steel rods and it would be almost impossible to get through the door without caving in the side of the home.



The Nightlock is a slide in solution that provides almost as much stopping force if you use the three inch galvanized screws we spoke of before to secure the floor plate. Make sure that at least one hits and sinks all the way into a floor joist and you should have no problems with the stopping power of this great solution. Again, if coupled with the steel rods, there is absolutely no way anyone is coming through that door short of cutting through it or caving in the side of your home. .



This concludes the section on hardening your home while the social contract remains in place. In the next article we will cover a few options for creating a part of your home that is virtually impenetrable to random marauders and the implications that come with it.

Tools needed:

- Drill
- Long 1/4 inch drill bit (More than 6 inches)
- Short 3/8 inch drill bit
- 1/4 inch Steel Rods - cut at 6 inches in length
- Window locks of your choice

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