



Home Sweet Home: Safety Tips for New Homeowners

Home security can often be overlooked in favor of more pressing issues for new homeowners. While fire alarms and working locks may be top of mind, there are other aspects of home security that can go unnoticed but are just as critical.

“New homeowners will address safety issues during the home inspection process, but home security goes far beyond that,” Sandy Gaskins, Board President of the Pee Dee REALTOR® Association, said. “Home security helps homeowners settle into their new residence more safely, so the sooner measures are put in place the better.”

About three out of every four burglaries occur at a residential property, according to the FBI [Crime in the U.S., 2013]. The average home burglary results in a \$2,322 loss.

According to police departments nationwide, burglary is one of the most common household property crimes, and it's also one of the easiest to prevent. Homeowners can only benefit from taking appropriate home security precautions.

The Pee Dee REALTOR® Association compiled the following list of home security tips for new homeowners:

- **Maintain your yard.** Well-groomed landscaping is an important aspect of home security. By keeping your shrubbery trimmed, criminals are unable to hide behind them.
- **Install outdoor lighting.** A well-lit exterior discourages criminals from hiding in your landscaping, and makes your home less approachable. Lights with motion sensors are also a good idea.
- **Update door and lock hardware.** It's always a good idea to replace your locks and make sure that all easily accessible entry points are secure when you move into a new home. This also includes evaluating window security and installing additional security measures if needed.
- **Meet your neighbors.** The more friendly eyes watching out for your property the better. By introducing yourself to your neighbors, you'll both be more comfortable alerting each other if something appears different.
- **Consider installing an alarm system.** Security systems are a major deterrent for criminals, but they don't need to be expensive to be effective. An alarm system could easily be worth the cost and peace of mind it provides.
- **Check batteries in fire and carbon monoxide detectors.** In addition to taking preventative measures against burglary, another critical safety measure within your control is to protect your home from fire and carbon monoxide poisoning.