

Reducing Crime in Rural Alabama — The Four Point Plan:

Brought to you by:

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System and
your County Sheriff's Department



BURGLARY

Burglary is the unlawful entry of a structure to commit a felony or a theft. Includes forcible entry, unlawful entry and attempted forcible entry.

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- There were 41,105 burglaries reported in 2003, a 2% increase from 2002.**
- There were 913.3 burglaries per 100,000 inhabitants. On the average, there were 112.6 burglaries reported per day.**
- 4,359 burglaries were cleared for an 11% clearance rate.**
- 3,180 persons were arrested for burglary: 19% juveniles; 90% males; and 52% white.**

- 74% of the burglaries were forcible entry, 25% were unlawful entries, and 1% were attempted forcible entry. In 60% of burglaries the point of entry was a door; in 23% a window; and in 16% the point of entry was other.
- There were 25,598 residential burglaries with 36% being at night, and 64% during the day. There were 15,507 non-residential burglaries with 50% being at night, and 50% during the day. 16% of all burglaries occurred on a Friday while 14% occurred on a Wednesday or a Thursday.

BURGLARY TRENDS 1999-2003

Rural crime in Alabama is on the rise, and all rural citizens need to do all they can to reduce crime rates for themselves and for their neighbors.

Step 1 Form a Neighborhood Watch Program in your community.

Rural Neighborhood Watch Programs are supported by county sheriffs' departments and the National Sheriffs' Association.

Talk to your neighbors and get their commitment to be a part of an organization to reduce crime in your community.

The next step is to call the local sheriff's department, and ask for their assistance and support in your neighborhood.

Your organization can get assistance from the National Sheriffs' Association by going to the website, <http://sheriffs.org/>, where you will find information about the National Neighborhood Watch Program.



<http://sheriffs.org/>

Crime prevention materials mentioned on the website, such as signage, decals, and inventory recording forms, are available from National Sheriffs' Association's National Neighborhood Watch Program at: 1450 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 or via fax 703-519-8567.



You may want the local sheriffs' department to meet with your group as it gets started. You can then proceed to hold training meetings in your neighborhood.



The first step in reducing crime is to form a Neighborhood Watch Program. There is power in numbers when it comes to reducing crime. When neighbors help each other, all crime reduction techniques are more effective.



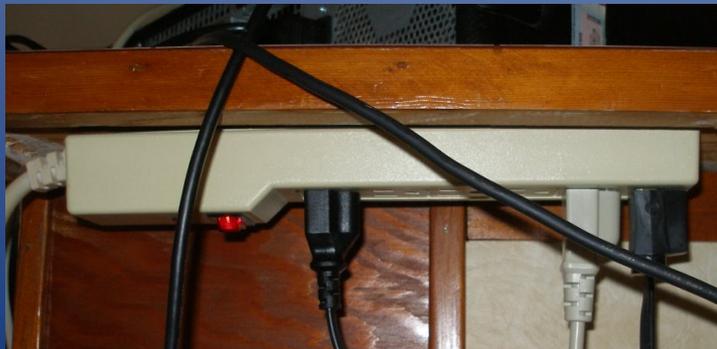
Step 2 Marking your property for recovery can be done in several different ways:

Stamp a number on your article where it is not likely to be seen until it is sold or found by law Enforcement.



Take pictures of household property and put the description on an inventory form with date of purchase and cost.

This can also be helpful if the item is not recovered and a homeowner's insurance claim is filed.



An electronic chip similar to those used on cattle ear tags can be put on large equipment in a place where it will not likely be found, but can be detected by a computer chip reader, similar to those used at cattle auctions.



Small tools can be marked with your Alabama driver's license number using an engraving tool. Do not use your Social Security number; this puts you more at risk of identity theft. Pictures of your property should be kept in a file and put in a safe place. Many times, thieves are people who know you.



Step 3 Make your residence appear lived in even when you are away.

You can use inexpensive electrical circuit timers to turn on/off lamps, radios, and television sets during evening hours. Adding perimeter motion detector lights can also help protect your property.



It can be helpful to leave in-home timers on year-round, especially if you follow a certain routine at home. The only people who need to know that your home will be vacant are people you trust and neighbors who participate in your Neighborhood Watch Program.



Step 4 Locks, chains, and fences will not stop thieves, but will add to their risk while accessing your property.

Farms and homesteads with one ingress and egress route with a locking gate or a sensor that detects entry may make thieves move to an easier target.



Sensible thieves always measure the risk that will be encountered in attempts to steal property versus the rewards. If risks are excessive, they will likely move to an easier, less risky target.



All expensive equipment, such as tractors, trucks, and automobiles need to be locked and stored close to the residence with motion detector lighting that will come on when approached at night.





Copper wiring in the drive motors and control boxes is often taken from irrigation systems near the road.



Signs should be posted to prevent unwarranted access to valued farm equipment. Children should have a safe play area on the farm and not be granted access to heavy-farm equipment areas.

Farmers park high value equipment too close to public access roads which make the equipment easy targets for vandalism or theft. Equipment should be marked with the Farmer's own identification number and placed a safe distance away from main roads and highways to prevent theft.



All fertilizer, pesticides, small tools, and grain bins should be locked until accessed even in daylight. If grain bins are not locked, small pieces of paper with a driver's license number printed on it can be strewn throughout the grain put in during a bin loading operation.

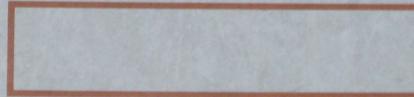


Roads without gates can have locking heavy chains to limit access. All livestock should have ear tags that can be read with a computer reader at livestock markets and slaughter houses that will positively identify the owner.



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OWNER

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In Summary

- **Join or organize with all neighbors in your neighborhood to form a watch program.**
- **Get connected to your local law enforcement team, Sheriff's Department, and your local District Attorney as well as your county agent's office to make sure they are aware of your watch program and efforts to reduce rural crime in your neighborhood.**
- **Get in touch with your county Extension office for training and assistance with the RCR program in Alabama.**

- **Mark all valuable belongings so they can be identified for easy recovery.**
- **Make your home appear lived in.**
- **Use motion detector lighting and/or security cameras where valuable property is stored away from the home.**
- **Use locks and gates to limit access to your property.**
- **Use signs to reduce your vulnerability to thieves.**