

Country's Best Log Homes

Best Home Security Tips

Home-security tips to protect your cabin so you can relax and enjoy it
by Whitney Richardson



One-third of burglaries are classified as unlawful entries, in which no force was used to enter the home. All the security technologies on the market won't protect your home if you forget to engage them. Take the time to make sure your doors and windows are locked, systems are activated, etc., before leaving your cabin unattended.

When you're relaxing at the cabin, the last thing you're probably apt to think about is property theft. How could crime ever infiltrate the peaceful setting

surrounding you? Taking that “it-could-never-happen-to-me” attitude, however, may be just the opportunity that some ne’er-do-well is looking for.

According to the FBI, a burglary occurred every 14.6 seconds in the United States, with an average \$2,119 in valuables stolen per theft, for an estimated total of 2.1 million burglaries in 2010. Although less than 1 percent (190,342) of those crimes occurred in nonurban/nonsuburban areas, there’s no reason to risk being one of those chosen few.

Thankfully, there are plenty of options out there, from state-of-the-art wireless systems to solid hardware and reinforcement solutions. To determine what your cabin will require, think about the following:

- How will you access your cabin? This will help you determine where you need to install specific security precautions, such as a Grade 1 deadbolt or a camera. Make sure to protect your windows as well.
- Who will be accessing your cabin? As a primary home, it may be just you and your significant other, each of whom has his or her own key. If you’re planning to open it up to friends and family, however, a keypad entry or remote monitoring system that will allow you to grant them access when you’re not there may be more practical to decrease the chances that a key is lost in an exchange or that a hidden spare can be lifted by an unintentional guest. The convenience of access codes versus actual keys extends easily to rental properties as well.
- How often will you be there? If you will be there the majority of the time, it may not be a large hassle to ask your neighbors to check up on the house on occasional trips. If you’re splitting your time between your cabin and another property, additional precautions may need to be taken, such as timers for lights to make it appear as though you are home even when you’re not or video surveillance to keep an eye on the property while you’re away.

Once you have an idea of what your security needs will be, it’s time to start shopping.



Even if you're not actually there, technology exists to turn your lights on and off at the cabin via smartphone or computer to create the illusion of occupancy and better secure your cabin.

Protection First

When consumers think about home security, many tend to jump straight to alarm systems. Although necessary to alert homeowners and local authorities to a break-in incident, alarms are not a preventative measure in and of themselves. "Understand the difference between an alarm and security," states Alan Young, CEO of Armor Concepts, a Nashville, Tennessee-based home-protection solution manufacturer. "They are two different things — an alarm doesn't do anything to secure the system."

In addition to installing an alarm, make sure you also put in proper provisions to prevent someone from getting into your cabin in the first place (or, at the very least, make it difficult for him or her to trespass). Young suggests simple precautions such as frame reinforcements to help prevent cabin door kick-ins, Grade 1 deadbolt locks, powering off your garage door opener

and “pinning” your windows — a technique that involves placing nails within the window frame to make it more difficult to slide open.

“If someone has all day to get in, they will. You just want to make sure you make it as difficult as possible,” Young explains. “You’re going to deter 70 to 80 percent of people out there [with basic, inexpensive solutions].”

And the other 20 to 30 percent? “That’s where alarms come in,” he adds. “That limits the amount of time that people who are going to find another way in have in the house.”

Other simple safety measures include cabin landscaping in the form of trimming back trees and shrubs to eliminate hiding spots; installing motion-detection lighting on your cabin exterior; covering windows with shutters or drapes so that potential burglars cannot see what’s inside; turning on lights to make it look like someone is home while you’re away; or even leaving a car out front, if possible, so the cabin appears occupied.

“The more you can do to make your house look lived in, the better,” Young recommends. “It’s counterintuitive, but it deters the casual burglar.”

Technology Advances

New technological solutions on the market can assist in keeping up inhabited appearances and supplying more secure access to the cabin, as well as providing additional home-monitoring support — from video surveillance to thermostat control. Tablet devices such as iPads are helping to heighten awareness of such solutions, with monitoring applications available from a variety of providers.

“Home automation is in the early stages, but it will start to grow faster,” observes Steve Samolinski, director of solution management at hardware manufacturer Schlage, which also provides an open-protocol home-monitoring system called LiNK. “People want to have that peace of mind and control.”



Schlage's LiNK line of security products includes a keypad entry to allow homeowners the flexibility to create one-time access codes for guests or renters, wireless features to monitor the home and surrounding area remotely, and thermostat control to cut down costs on energy bills.

Convenience is a key factor, with access to your cabin at the simple click of a mouse, or tap on a phone or tablet. Features typically include the ability to lock and unlock doors (or create and delete passcodes, in the case of a keypad entry) for arriving guests; receive alerts when a door is accessed, a certain number of incorrect entries have been posted to a keypad, or a door or

window is left unlocked; and to turn lights on and off (or even program the system to turn the lights on upon your entry).

Add-on elements to consider include temperature controls — not only the ability to turn heat or cooling on and off for comfort and energy savings, but also to alert you to sudden drops in temperature in case of a mechanical incident at the cabin — and video surveillance, which can alert you to the traffic in and around your cabin as well as weather conditions. (Read: Watching a major rainstorm wreak havoc on your cabin may result in a quick trip there or a phone call to local services to check things out and make sure there are no serious damages.)

“It goes beyond home security to really security of the premises and the peace of mind that comes along with that,” Samolinski states.

Remote-access systems such as LiNK are often designed with ease of use and installation in mind, as well as the flexibility to expand the system as needed. The connectivity required to operate them may be tricky, depending on how remote your cabin is, so check into all possible connections (Internet, satellite, etc.) to determine which will be the most reliable and cost-efficient for you. Also, check with a security professional to make sure your cabin’s construction materials won’t obstruct wireless signals either.
