



# Palos Verdes Estates Police Department

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The Palos Verdes Estates Police Department has provided the following information to help residents make their homes more secure and guard against loss of property.

The most common crimes that occur in the City of Palos Verdes Estates are Property Crimes. They are mostly crimes of opportunity which capitalize on the carelessness and neglect of the homeowner, renter or property owner. The following tips are provided by the Palos Verdes Estates Police Department to help you prevent home burglaries, vandalism, and other property crimes by controlling access, providing visibility, and maintaining your property. It also contains tips on protecting your home and property when you are away and provides information you might have on residential burglaries. If you do become a victim, it includes tips on making sure the police can find your home and identify your property. These tips can significantly enhance the security of your home and property.

## **Physical protection measures:**

- Install single cylinder dead-bolt locks on all doors. Bolts should have a minimum throw of 1 inch. Special locks are need on double and Dutch doors.
- Install locking devices on all sliding glass doors and windows.
- Install good locks all doors that lead outside through garages or storage areas.
- Re-key or change all locks when moving into a new home.
- Install locks on gates, garages, sheds, etc.
- Go to a locksmith or hardware store for advice on locks.
- Reinforce the glass in windows on the lock sides of doors so a burglar cannot break them and reach in to open the door.
- Install a good side-yard gate and keep it locked at all times. Side and back entries are the most common access points for burglars.
- Plant bushes with thorns or prickly leaves near windows and along fences.
- Trim trees so that limbs don't provide access to roofs, second stories, etc.
- Call the PVEPD Community Relations Officer Marcelle Herrera at: 310-750-9788 or contact her by email at: [mherrera@pvestates.org](mailto:mherrera@pvestates.org). to arrange for a free home security survey.

## **Deterrent measures:**

- Join [Neighborhood Watch](#) and put Neighborhood Watch stickers on entry doors and windows.

- Put alarm company stickers on entry doors and windows, and place alarm company signs in your yard indicating your home is alarmed and monitored.
- Consider having a dog that can scare a stranger away by either barking or looking fierce.
- Use fencing, gates, landscaping, pavement treatment, signs, etc. to define clear boundaries between your property and adjoining properties.
- Install a Camera System ([register with the Voluntary Camera Registration Program](#)).

### **Home alarm systems:**

- Alarm systems usually include one or more of the following components: photocell or magnetic contacts on doors and windows, heat or motion detectors in interior spaces, glass break detectors, keypads with a means of checking the status of the system, and audible alarms. All equipment should be Underwriters Laboratory (UL) certified.
- If you have an alarm system, use it.
- Multiple sensors are preferred because they reduce false alarms, which are wasteful of police resources and lead to fines and permit revocation.
- See Sec. [8.08 of the Palos Verdes Estates Municipal Code](#) for burglary alarm business requirements and responsibilities, and alarm user requirements.
- Get alarm company references from friends or neighbors. Get at least three estimates in writing. The PVEPD does not prefer or recommend companies, brands, or types of security systems.
- Make sure the alarm company has a City Business Tax Certificate and is licensed by the State of California. You can verify the latter by calling the State of California Bureau of Security and Investigative Services at **(916) 322-4000** or going online at <http://www.dca.ca.gov/consumer/wll.shtml>.
- If your system is monitored, make sure the monitoring station is open 24/7 and has backup power. The company's customer service department should also be open 24/7.
- Make sure you understand your service contract, all the points of protection and the equipment to be installed, the initial and monthly payments, and the warranty period.
- Inform your insurance company. You may qualify for a discount.

### **Security procedures:**

- Keep all doors and windows locked, even if you are just going out "for a minute." If a window is left open a few inches for ventilation, pins or dowels should be inserted in the tracks to prevent someone from opening it more.
- Lock gates, garages, and sheds after each use.

- Store bicycles, mowers, ladders, etc. in a locked garage or shed, or secure them to some stationary point.
- Don't leave notes on your door when you are away from home.
- Don't leave keys in mailboxes or planters, under doormats, or in other obvious hiding spots. Leave an extra key with a neighbor.
- Learn to recognize who belongs in your neighborhood, development, or apartment, i.e., residents, workers, guests, etc.
- Know who is at your door before opening it. Check photo registration card before dealing with any solicitors, peddlers, interviewers, etc. These persons are required to obtain an Identification Card from the city and display it on the front of their clothing. They are allowed to solicit only between 9:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. except by appointment.
- Be suspicious of persons making unsolicited offers of services.
- Post a NO SOLICITING sign if you don't want a solicitor to ring your door bell, knock on your door, or make any other sound to attract your attention.
- Ask for photo identification before letting in anyone you don't know. Check out the identification with the company, or call the police department, if you are suspicious.
- Never let a stranger enter your home to use the telephone. Offer to make the call yourself in an emergency.
- Don't give your name, phone number, or whereabouts on your answering machine message. Never say you aren't home. Just ask the caller to leave a message.
- Don't leave your home keys on a chain with your vehicle keys when you use valet parking. Also, don't leave your garage door opener where it is easily accessible.
- Don't give maids, babysitters, or others working in your home access to your home keys or alarm codes.
- Get to know your neighbors and report suspicious activity.
- Don't go in your home if you suspect someone has broken into your home, e.g., if a window or screen is broken, a door is ajar, or a strange vehicle is parked in the driveway. Go to a neighbor's home and call the PVEPD.
- Don't discuss your assets or finances with strangers.
- Don't keep large sums of money at home.
- Keep valuable papers, stocks, bonds, expensive jewelry, coin collections, etc. in a bank safe deposit box. Don't store them at home unless you have a security closet or a safe that is well hidden and cannot be removed.

**Identify Your Property:**

- Etch your driver's license number on any valuables that might be stolen.
- Photograph valuables that cannot be etched.
- Keep a detailed, up-to-date records of your valuables. Include type, model, serial number, proof of purchase and fair market value.

**Maintain Your Property:**

- Keep property in good condition and free of trash, litter, weeds, leaves, graffiti, inoperative vehicles, and other things that indicate neglect in caring for your property.
- Replace broken windows or screens.
- Repair broken fences and gate locks.
- Use screens, wired glass, or other protection for light fixtures and bulbs.
- Remove loose rocks and other objects that could be used to vandalize your property.

**Provide Visibility:**

- Leave outside lights on after dark or have outside lights controlled by a motion detector. Make sure there are no dark areas around the house, garage, or yard in which a person could hide. Street lights are generally inadequate for illuminating your property.
- Check lights regularly and replace burnt out bulbs.
- Trim bushes to less than 3 feet to eliminate possible hiding places, especially near windows and sidewalks.
- Keep trees and bushes neatly trimmed to allow visibility into your property.
- Replace solid walls in front yards with open fencing to eliminate hiding places and make climbing more difficult.

**Make Sure the Police Can Find Your Home:**

- Make sure your street address number is clearly visible from the street and is well lighted at night so the police and other emergency personnel can locate your home easily. Numbers should be at least 4 inches high on single family buildings and 12 inches high on multiple-unit residential buildings.
- Make sure your unit number (in a multifamily housing development) is clearly visible from paths in the development. A directory or map that shows paths and unit locations should be placed at the main entrance of the development.
- Provide the PVEPD with an entry code if your home is gated or if you live in a gated apartment complex.

### **Protect Your Home and Property When You Are Away:**

- Lock all doors and windows. Use deadbolts, dowels, or locking pins in sliding glass doors and windows to keep them from being pried open.
- Never announce your vacation plans on Facebook, My Space, Twitter, or other social networking sites.
- Use timers on lights, radios, TVs, etc. to make them go on and off during the day and night to make your home appear occupied.
- Stop mail and newspaper delivery, or have neighbor pick up anything left at the home.
- Ask the neighbors to watch your home and report any suspicious activities.
- Leave your itinerary with a neighbor so you can be contacted in an emergency.
- Disconnect your electric garage door opener and padlock the door, preferably on the inside.
- Contact the PVEPD by phone at: **(310) 378-4211** or **(310) 378-5211** or visit the PVEPD website at: <http://www.pvestates.org/services/police-department> to request vacation home checks when you'll be out of town.
- Set your burglar alarm and notify your alarm company that you will be away. Then if an alarm occurs when you are away the company will not call your home first to verify the alarm; it will notify the police directly. Also provide the alarm company with an up-to-date list of persons to contact about the alarm and the need to secure your home after a burglary.

### **Providing Information on Residential Burglaries:**

If you have any information that might help solve a crime call the PVEPD and ask to speak to the detective handling the case. Or you can call [Crime Stoppers](#) at its 24-hour hotline at **(800) 222-8477** and provide information anonymously.