

15 Tips for Back-to-school Safety and Security

The security-minded folks at Schlage locks want America's families to know their options as their kids head back-to-school. Always keep in mind that security is like the journey to school; it's an ongoing process that requires you to keep your head up and be aware of your surroundings at all times.

Tips for kids and parents:

1. If your child has a mobile phone, make sure he or she carries it in hand with Mom/Dad and 911 on speed dial. Never hesitate to call 911 in case of emergency.
2. Use the buddy system: When walking, biking or just standing at the bus stop, arrange to buddy up with a friend or family member.
3. Always travel along well-lit common paths. Avoid shortcuts that put you into a vulnerable situation, including areas with higher crime rates, drug activity, teens hanging out, or even highways or railroad tracks.
4. Follow the law and bicycle safety rules and wear a helmet.
5. If an adult ever approaches a child for directions, to look for a lost puppy or because "Mom (or Dad) is hurt and in the hospital," the child should know these are lures predators use to abduct a child.
6. It is never appropriate to accept a ride from a stranger or even a known adult without the absolute permission of the parent.
7. If the child is ever followed on foot or in a car, he or she should seek help immediately by calling 911 and going into the nearest police station or store.
8. Trust your gut. When something seems wrong, it is wrong. If your belly feels funny or the hair on the back of your neck or arms stands on end, run to a safe place.
9. Learn how to resist. Self-defense for kids is a necessary tool for fighting off a predatory adult. Kids should learn to kick and gouge and scream in the event an adult tries to compromise them.
10. Provide your child with your location and emergency contact info, along with a backup information of another adult.
11. Never accept money, gifts or food from an adult under any circumstances.
12. Set up GPS tracking on your child's mobile phone. Check with the phone's manufacturer for setup instructions.
13. Beware of what's being posted on social media. Always be aware that anyone, including authorities, predators or school administrators, may be watching. Post appropriately and do not reveal locations.
14. When getting home, make sure the house is locked before walking in. Always look for red flags that might signal an intrusion. If something seems wrong, it is wrong.

15. Consider [Schlage's Touchscreen Deadbolt](#), which is a keyless lock. Eliminating keys eliminates lost keys and lockouts.

Robert Siciliano home security expert to [Schlage](#) discussing [home security and identity theft](#) on TBS Movie and a Makeover. [Disclosures](#). For Roberts FREE ebook text-SECURE Your@emailaddress -to 411247.

10 Halloween Safety Tips

Halloween is coming! My wife and her girlfriends are going to be the characters from the *Wizard of Oz*, including Dorothy, the Scarecrow, the Cowardly Lion, the Tin Man, Toto and even a flying monkey! I'm going trick-or-treating with the little ones and will be eating 20 lbs. of chocolate on November 1st. The horror!

Want to make your fall festivities a bit less scary? Prepare for a safe and secure Halloween by following some smart and simple safety tips:

1. Use the buddy system: Have kids walk in pairs, groups, and, even better, with a trusted adult.
2. Use reflective tape: Drivers may not see your kids, but they will have a better chance if the little ghosts and goblins are wearing reflective tape.
3. Scrutinize candy: Look at everything carefully before eating. The chances of someone tampering with treats is slim, but it happens. And avoid homemade treats.
4. Flashlights: Carry them, wear them, have them turned on. You want to see others and for others to see you.
5. Makeup: Test makeup on a small part of the skin to see if there are any reactions. Be careful around the eyes and avoid applying it near the mouth.
6. Pay attention: Walk, don't run, and look both ways before crossing the street. Use crosswalks.
7. Sidewalks: Stay off the street. Even though adults should know better and drive slow, they don't.
8. Beware of falling: Well-fitted costumes and shoes help to avoid unnecessary trips and falls.
9. Never enter homes. It always bothers me when people invite kids in. While it may be nice, it just isn't necessary. Enter homes only with an adult.
10. Stop with the eggs! Egging homes or other kids, spraying shaving cream or dumping hair removal products on one's head is just bad. While some of it may be fun, there are lots of eye injuries with these activities.

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10 Holiday Security Tips

Christmas trees, mistletoe, candy canes, turkey and stuffing bring out scammers, phishers, burglars and identity thieves. I'm not purposefully trying to be a Grinch here, but I'm just reminding you that good times, unfortunately, bring out the worst in bad people. This time of the year is prime season for criminals to seek out victims and separate them from their money and stuff.

Stay merry. Here's how:

1. Lock up. No matter how long you are gone, lock your home's doors and use quality locks from [Schlage](#).
2. Don't forget car locks. Don't leave your keys in the ignition; lock your car doors, even when you are at the gas station and filling up.
3. Be aware. When in parking lots or garages, at malls or festivals, watch your back, be aware of your surroundings and look for red flags.
4. Free up your hands. Don't weigh yourself down with lots of bags and packages. Use a carriage.
5. Get delivery notices. Package theft is big. Most shippers offer email notifications for tracking packages, so you have the tools with which to become acutely aware of when your stuff is supposed to arrive and be there to accept it.
6. Set up security cameras. Inside and outside your home, you should have cameras to allow you to peek in on all home activity. They also act as a deterrent to burglars and thieves.
7. Put your jewels away. When home or away, and even when you are entertaining, lock up your stuff in a bolted safe.
8. Update your browser. Viruses often end up on a PC because the browser is out of date.
9. Update your operating system. It's not enough to have antivirus; you must also update the critical security patches in your computer's operating system.
10. Check your statements. Every week around the holidays, pay close(r) attention to your credit card statements and reconcile your charges.

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Summertime is Burglary Time: Lock up!

According to U.S. Department of Justice statistics, an American home is broken into about every 15 seconds. Summer marks a busy time of year when Americans need to be extra aware of heightened home security breaches. According to the FBI, July and August have the highest monthly burglary rates, as intruders look to take advantage of increased travel during the summer months.

Homeowners are advised to take action and prevent intrusions by strengthening home security. The best defense against burglary is prevention and with proper planning you can help make your home unappealing to burglars. Burglars watch to see when you are traveling on vacation and even look for signs you are gone for minutes or hours at a time.

Here are a few tips to keep your home secure during summer months:

- Protect your home's main point of entry by installing a strong lock like the [Schlage Touchscreen Deadbolt](#). I like this product because it offers the highest grade residential security available and has a built-in alarm, anti-pick shield and is even easy enough for you to install on your own.
- Don't leave windows open and unlocked while you are gone. Close and lock them even if you are just leaving for a few minutes. This will cut off easy access to your home.
- Don't leave outside lights on 24 hours a day. Using timers on indoor and outdoor lights is an easy way to give the illusion that you're home – even when you are not.
- Don't leave your driveway empty and even ask a neighbor to park their car in your driveway while you are gone.
- Don't allow your overgrown grass to grab attention. Schedule time for a landscaper or have someone trusted mow your lawn if you're going to be gone for weeks at a time.
- Don't pack your car openly before a trip. This should be done in your garage or late at night under the cover of darkness.
- Do have trusted friends, family, or neighbors collect your deliveries and let the police know you are traveling.
- Don't list your vacation plans on social media. Burglars love when you tell them you are 2,000 miles away and wait until you get home to post all those photos.
- Lock all your doors and unplug garage door openers.
- Don't share your travel plans on a voicemail outgoing message and make sure to collect all your voicemails so the "mailbox is full" messages don't play.

- Don't leave valuables sitting on dressers or in unlocked draws and make sure to lock everything of significant value in a safe.
- Use a home automation system like [Nexia Home Intelligence](#) to check in on your home from afar. By using a system like this with a Schlage Camera, homeowners can monitor unusual activity to spot anything out of the ordinary.

Summertime doesn't have to be burglar time if you follow these dos and don'ts!

Robert Siciliano personal and home security specialist to [Schlage](#) discussing [home security and identity theft](#) on TBS Movie and a Makeover. [Disclosures](#)

5 Tips to Backdoor Home Security

The old adage that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link rings true with home security too. A home is only as secure as its weakest door, window or lock. So in this post, I'll address means of egress: doors.

Front doors are often decorative and, most often, heavy with a solid core, giving the impression of security. What's funny to me is that all a burglar has to do is go into the back yard to find a flimsy wooden door that often has up to nine panes of glass. This is called a "9-Lite Entry Door" and is often an easy target for thieves. The reality is that all a burglar has to do is break one of the nine windows nearest the doorknob and reach in to open. We've all seen this in a movie when the villain is going after his target. Side-entrance garage doors and walkout basement doors are often constructed the same way.

Protect your alternate entrances:

1. Solid-core doors: The obvious solution here is to install solid-core "front doors" with minimal (or no) windows at the garage, side entrance, walkout basement and back door.
2. Doorjamb reinforcement: Consider door reinforcement technologies that beef up the hinges, strike plate, doorjamb and wrap around the knob and deadbolt.
3. Camera surveillance: Rear entrances are attractive to criminals because they are often hidden and out of plain sight. Installing security cameras with signage may make a burglar think twice.
4. Home security: Install a monitored home security system—or, at a minimum, install motion sensors, stickers and signage alerting a burglar your home is alarmed.
5. Lock your doors: It's not enough to have quality locks like [Schlage](#) locks as your doorknob and deadbolt—you also have to lock them! Many burglaries happen simply because people don't lock their doors!

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House Keys for the Kids...When Your Children are Ready

Education.com [reports](#) that according to the U.S. census, one third of all school-age children in the United States are, for some part of the week, [latchkey](#) kids—that is, they go home to an empty house or apartment. The total number may be between five and seven million children between five and 13 years old. (I say five is just way too young.) Anyway, the Census Bureau found that 15 percent were home alone before school, 76 percent after school.

Whether due to necessity or because providing a 12-year-old house keys frees up a parent to run errands, the day will come when the decision to hand over the keys arises.

Parents are (mostly) the best judge of their child's character and can disseminate when their kids are ready to be on their own and hand over the house keys. My parents, like many others, worked when I was a young teen and didn't have many options for child care, so I got the keys at 14. And, like many kids, I promptly abused that privilege by having boatloads of kids over to the house.

Today, with technology at our fingertips, it has become much easier for a parent to monitor their child's comings and goings with various mobile applications, security cameras and GPS devices.

Another advancement in technology is keyless door locks with a programmable touch pad. So latchkey kids become "touch-pad" kids! Ha!

[Schlage's Touchscreen Deadbolt](#) is also enabled to work with Nexia Home Intelligence, a home automation system that allows you to control locks, thermostats, lights, cameras and more from wherever you and the internet happen to be. Lock or unlock your door from anywhere with your cell phone, or schedule lock codes to be active only on certain days at specific times. You can also receive text alerts when an alarm triggers or when specific codes provided to your kids are entered at the lock.

Once a parent comes to the conclusion it is necessary to provide keys to a kid, it might now be a good time to consider ditching the keys and handing over the passcode!

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