

Home Security – a personal account

Preliminaries

- As goods become less obtainable due to scarcity and inflation, those who have not prepared may unfortunately be more inclined to take from those who have.
- There are many types of security – food security, financial security, emotional security.
- Here I am dealing primarily with **property security** – the preparations I've personally taken to deter intrusion, burglary and possibly worse.
- **I am not an expert** – I've learned by trial & error and mistakes –and have made plenty.
- I will be dealing with what I've discovered works best for **my** property – **your** circumstances and requirements will be different.
- My preparations are not based on a carefully thought out initial plan – they have grown like topsy as needs arose & I became aware of gaps.
- **Affordability** played major role in my choices – I would love to have been able to call up a local security company & ask them to install fully monitored system.

History

- In the first two months of this year (2022) I had three late-night intrusions onto my property.
- Remember these are still – relatively – ***the good times***.
- **First occasion:** a gate at the side of my house was opened. The very audible gate alarm was triggered, the gate was shut, the intruder scarpered.
- **Second occasion:** a full bag of potting mix was stolen. This did not require the alarmed gate to be opened. I'm fairly certain, therefore, that this was the first intruder returning (he/she knew not to open the gate).
- **Third occasion:** side gate was opened, the alarm was again triggered, the gate was shut, the intruder again took off. As this one obviously was not aware of the gate alarm, it is presumed to be a different person.
- **Conclusion:** three attempted intrusions. In every case the inexpensive – but noisy - alarm prevented the intruder(s) gaining access to the back of the house area & stealing a lot more than just a cheap bag of potting mix. ***The alarms achieved their desired purpose.***

Location

- I live near the CBD of a moderately sized city.
- Several gang houses are nearby. Gang members walk past several times each day on their way to a nearby bottle store.
- Teenage pushbike riders have sometimes been observed riding slowly along the footpath, carefully looking into properties.
- They are probably not the only culprits, but gang members have been observed thieving items, including an expensive food delivery, in the area.

Philosophy

- It is surely better to **deter** a would-be intruder than just be able to produce some lovely surveillance photos after the house has been entered and ransacked.

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- Short of barricading yourself into a prison-like enclosure, it is **impossible** to make your place 100% intruder-proof.
- However, I do attempt to present sufficient obstacles to convince a would-be intruder that other places may be easier targets.

Alarms

- The number 1 problem with alarms is arguably **false alarms** – even, it seems, with professionally installed alarms.
- I have several genuine and a few fake alarms, all self-installed.
- On the **apex of my house**, very visible from the street, is an empty alarm box I bought during a sale from JayCar Electronics.
- The **gate on my main entrance** has a contact switch – open the gate and the alarm next to my bed goes off (it is turned off during the day).
- **Inside the house** is an SMS alarm with several sensors, a siren and a remote. Inexpensive, but the Chinese-English instructions are generally gibberish.
- On the **side of the house** is a small motion sensor alarm. Because it is not weatherproof, and due to the fact that the wide beam would otherwise be triggered by every passing cat, I built a box to protect it from the weather and to considerably confine the angle of the beam.
- **Under the eaves** on the back porch is a fake sensor with a battery powered blinking red LED.
- My **vehicle** sits under a carport. I have a fairly expensive car alarm system sitting in a box. It was installed on a previous vehicle but, due to the frequency of false alarms, I preferred to install a fake solar powered blinking light on my present vehicle + a fairly robust steering wheel lock.
- My **garage** was broken into a few years ago when some young intruders cut the side door padlock with a pair of bolt cutters. I now have a padlock with a much heavier shackle.
- I was fortunate to find a watchdog alarm on Trade Me going for a bargain price.
- This alarm is mounted inside the garage door. As someone approaches it begins to bark – mildly at first, but then frantically as the person gets nearer.
- This alarm has proved so realistic that it sometimes sets off real dogs in the neighbourhood and has warranted a visit from a neighbour concerned about my ‘dog’s’ welfare.

Cameras

- **Inside my back porch** is a dummy camera with a blinking light.
- A genuine **wireless camera IP** camera is mounted high up under the **front porch**. When I’m house sitting at a friend’s place I can monitor my three IP cameras (the other two are inside) via a phone app.

Lighting

- My theory here is to deny intruders a dark area in which to operate and to perhaps alert the neighbours.
- As with the alarms, my security lights detect motion.

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- Initially I inherited twin 500 watt mains-powered security lights. These were easily triggered by moving tree branches, cats etc. So they often remained on for long periods, leading to an increased power bill.
- Small solar panels, generally supplied with solar security lights, are often the best power option. Long-life lithium batteries + very low drain LED lighting now make this option very practical.
- Some panels are built directly onto to these lights. Others are separate, but connected by a cable.
- Basically they recharge from the sun during the day and turn on when they detect nearby motion during the night.
- My 77 LED security lights, costing under \$20 each via Trade Me, also contain dummy cameras (with the usual blinking LEDs).
- They are *very* bright.
- Due to the fact that they rarely turn on, I've found it's not necessary to worry about having my solar panels facing the optimal direction (north) for charging.
- With some security lights, such as those under my carport, it was necessary to have a separate solar panel mounted on the roof.
- These lights are activated by the occasional cat. My hope is that they may nevertheless deter an intruder, but I do not rely on them to alert me.
- When I'm away I also connect several 240v indoor lights to timers.

Towbar Hitch Lock

- This stays on my trailer whether it's inside my garage or outside.
- It prevents the trailer being connected to a towball.

Signs

- On my gate is a **beware of the dog** sign.
- Reinforced by the dog alarm sounding in the garage, this may cause an intruder some concern.
- I have an upright steel cabinet in the garage containing a few items of moderate value. On the outside I have attached a **hazardous voltage** sign which, I hope, may raise sufficient doubts to prevent someone popping the lock.
- **Electric fence** sign. Years ago it wasn't uncommon for intruders to use my property as a shortcut. Since I erected a dummy electric fence (with genuine electric fence fittings) there have not been any more attempts to jump over the back fence.
- **Neighbourhood Support** sign. These signs, scattered around the district, do at least indicate that we have a support network in this area.
- **Protected by electronic alarm system** sticker. Cheap, but again it may cause some uncertainty – especially if a few real or fake cameras are also dotted about.