

# HOME

# INVASTION

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# What are your rights to self-defense?

## Here's what you can and can't do to protect yourself legally speaking

Home Invasion is a concern for all of us! Just listen to the local news and you will most likely hear about the frightening ordeal. Are you adequately prepared to handle a criminal intruder in your home? Do you have a home invasion defense plan? Most importantly, do you know exactly what a home invasion is?

## What is a home invasion you might ask?

Essentially, a home invasion is defined as “the act of illegally burgling or entering a private and occupied dwelling for the purpose of committing a crime (such as robbery, assault, rape, murder, kidnapping, or any violation of the law against the occupant(s). Home invasion is generally an unauthorized and forceful entry into a dwelling.”

When preparing yourself and your family for a possible home invasion, ask yourself these important questions: Do you and your family members understand the importance of self-defense at home? Do you have a home protection plan should some criminal invade your home? Do you have the knowledge and expertise to keep both you and your family out of harm's way if a home invasion were to occur? Do you own a firearm, and are you trained to use it in a deadly home invasion situation? Do you have a designated safe room to keep you and your family out of harm's way?

If you answered “no” to any of these home protection questions, you and your loved ones may be at great risk of a violent and possibly deadly home invasion. Remember, self-defense at home is just as important as self-defense on the streets.

## IMPORTANT HOME INVASION DEFENSE FACTS

Home invasion is a serious threat to you and your loved ones. Here are a few sobering facts you should keep in mind when designing a good home safety plan.

- Many home invasions will have multiple intruders.
- 38% of all assaults occur during a home invasion.
- 60% of all reported rapes occur during a home invasion.
- 1 of every 5 homes will experience a home invasion.
- The primary intent behind most home invasions is robbery (i.e., home invasion robbery)
- The most common weapons used in home invasions are knives and edged weapons.
- Victims are physically injured in 47% of all home invasions.
- 68% of all home invaders are strangers to their victims.
- The most common home invasion entry point is the front door.

## TWO SCENARIOS

Basically, there are two types of home invasion scenarios that you need to become familiar with and they are:

- **Home Invasion by forced entry**
- **Home Invasion by ruse**

## HOME INVASION BY FORCED ENTRY

A home invasion by forced entry occurs when the criminal literally forces his way into your home without the use of deception. For example, the intruder rings your front doorbell and then forces his way in when you open the door. Home invasions by forced entry can be when the home invader doesn't even bother to knock on your door. Instead he just forcefully kicks in your front door and takes over your home. Incidentally, the most common entry point for a home invasion is the front door:

There are a number of home protection measures you can take to help minimize the chances of a forced entry home invasion. Here are just a few suggestions:

- Make certain all exterior doors are solid with 1 3/4-inch hardwood.
- If possible, avoid glass panel or hollow-wood exterior doors. A determined criminal will blast right through them.
- Install heavy duty door locks with strike plates.
- Install heavy duty window frames.
- Put dead bolts on all doors and make certain they all have a minimum 1-inch throw.
- Never rely on spring bolts; they can be jimmed very easily.
- Establish a safe room in your home.
- Use only your initials and last names on mailboxes.
- Keep the trees and shrubbery around windows and doors well-trimmed.
- Make sure all your doors have a peephole and get in the habit of using it regularly.
- Don't use chain locks on exterior doors as they can easily be broken.
- Get a good security system installed in your home.
- Make certain all window screens are properly latched.
- Get into the habit of being alert and aware of the surrounding even when you are home.
- Make certain your porch light works, fix burned out light bulbs immediately.
- Get into the habit of keeping your doors and windows locked.
- Cover your garage door windows to keep potential home intruders from looking in.
- Don't open the door to strangers, period!
- Never leave the garage door open or unlocked.
- Consider installing floodlights in your backyard.
- Do not hide spare keys anywhere outside your home.
- Never give your house keys to service people such as carpenters, painters or repairmen.
- Routinely check all the locks on all the doors around your house.
- Secure sliding glass exterior doors with heavy duty bar braces.
- Never leave ladders unchained outside your home and never leave them up against the house.

Here are some other tips and suggestions that can help prepare you for a criminal invasion in your home.

- Stay in good shape, you can learn more by reading combat conditioning.
- Consider studying a reality based self defense system.
- If you don't have children consider hiding weapons at strategic places in your home.
- Pay attention to your local news and listen for trends of crime in your neighborhood.
- Mentally rehearse how you would handle various home invasion scenarios.

## Home Invasion by Ruse

A home invasion by ruse is when the invader uses deceptive tricks or “ruses” to get inside your home. Often, the criminal will fake his identity to gain your trust and lower your guard. For example, the intruder will dress up in a cable company uniform, ring your doorbell and tell you there is a problem with your cable. He will then politely request entry into your home. Once the criminal enters your home, he or she will immediately drop the act and overpower you and your loved ones with violence and fear to obtain cash, expensive jewelry, cell phones, credit cards, ATM PIN numbers or anything else of value.

## Common Home Invasion Ruses

It would be impossible to list each and every possible home invasion ruse or trick. However, here are several common home invasion tricks used by criminals.

- The criminal claims he is checking for a gas leak in your home.
- The criminal says he is checking a problem with your cable.
- The criminal tells you there is a problem with your telephone land line.
- The criminal claims he has a package to deliver such as an amazon.com order, flowers or telegram.
- The criminal asserts that you are the winner of a sweepstakes prize.
- The criminal claims he is collecting for charity.
- The criminal poses as an ordinary door solicitor.
- The criminal asks to use your rest room or needs to use your phone.

## Don't Get Duped!

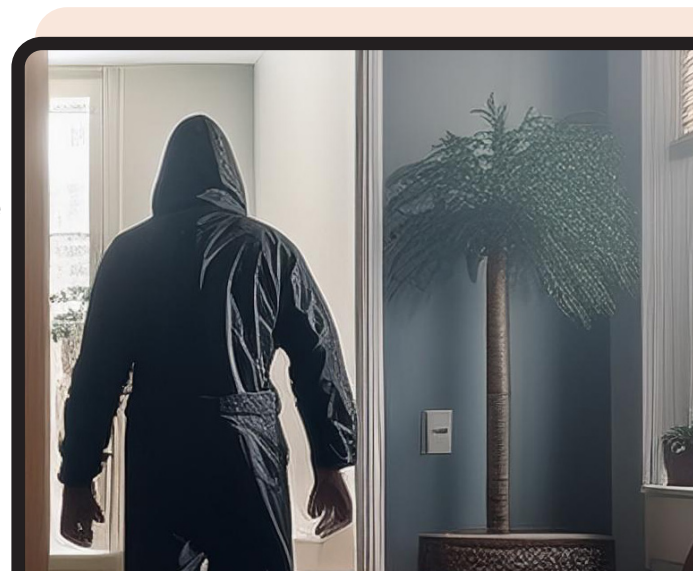
In this day and age, company uniforms don't guarantee that the person at your front door is a true agent or representative of that company. Often, company uniforms are stolen, copied or assembled to look exactly like a legitimate uniform. Don't be fooled by this. Take a real good look at the person's ensemble and look for clues of deception. Moreover, remember that just about every utility company equips their representatives with a photograph ID.

One of the best things you can do to prevent a home invasion by ruse is to learn to be comfortable saying “NO” to strangers who attempt to gain access into your home. Does it really matter if you might appear “paranoid” to a complete stranger? Who cares what they might think of you! It is always better to be safe than sorry.

Another effective home invasion preventative measure is to affix a large metal sign in front of your home that states: “No Trespassing” and “No Soliciting.” This metal sign may seem unsightly to some people but it's a very effective way of reducing the number of solicitors that come to your front door.

## MORE HOME INVASION DEFENSE ADVICE

Now that you have a better understanding of nature and characteristics of a home invasion, it's time for you and your family to set up or design a home protection plan in the event that a home invasion robbery.



## **Home invasion Defense #1: Plan Ahead for a Home Invasion**

Design a home invasion protection plan for you and your family. Begin by drawing a detailed diagram of your home, and then discuss your safety options and the various strategies you can employ if a criminal breaks into your house. Make certain all of your family members are familiar with the layout of your home to include all entrances, escape routes, and possible ambush zones. Discuss what types of makeshift weapons are located throughout the house, and make certain everyone knows how to use them correctly.

## **Home Invasion Defense and the Safe Room**

During a home invasion, you will also need a designated safe room or panic room where family members can escape from the intruder and wait for the police to arrive. Most people choose a particular bedroom in their house. Be certain there is a working telephone (preferably a cellular phone, in case the land line has been cut) in the safe room so you can contact an emergency dispatcher during a threatening home invasion encounter.

Your safe room should be a secure room that provides safety and shelter (and in some cases a hiding place) for you and your family in the event of a serious threat. This can include a home invasion, natural disaster or terrorist attack. A safe room must contain reliable communications equipment so that law enforcement or rescue personnel can be contacted while keeping you out of harms way.

If you have a security system in your home, make certain everyone is familiar with its operation and limitations. Don't rely, however, on the security system to alert you to an intruder. A seasoned criminal can break into any home undetected. Even if an alarm warns you of danger, it does not eliminate the home invasion threat. Remember, you and only you are responsible for your own safety and survival during a home invasion situation. Security alarms just notify you of a problem, they don't eliminate it.

## **Home invasion Defense #2: Alert the Cops**

If you think there is a home invasion, call the police immediately – even if you aren't absolutely certain there is a criminal intruder. It is better to be safe than sorry. In most cities, you simply need to dial 911 to speak to an emergency dispatcher; Remain calm, collect your thoughts, and tell the dispatcher the following information: your name and address; the type of crime being committed; the approximate location of the intruder(s); the intruder's general description, if possible; the exact location of you and your family members; whether anyone is injured; and if you (or the intruder) are armed with a firearm or other self defense weapon.

## **Home invasion Defense #3: Stay in Your Safe Room**

During a home invasion, it's vital that you and your family remain in the safe room until the police arrive. Keep the door of the room locked and have everyone stay away from the entrance. If possible, find cover behind a protective barrier (a bed, perhaps). If you do own a firearm, keep it pointed at the door. Stay focused and alert. Under no circumstances should you leave the safe room and search the house for the intruder. This is extremely dangerous and should be left to the police. Home invasions are often deadly! I can't emphasize this enough!

If the criminal intruder attempts to enter the safe room, tell him that you have called the police, that they are on their way, and that you are armed with a gun. If the intruder still attempts to force his way in, and if he presents a deadly threat to you or your family, you have every right to shoot him/her.

## **Home Invasion Defense #4: Holding a Criminal at Gunpoint During a Home Invasion**

If you somehow manage to capture and hold the criminal intruder at gunpoint, be sure to keep him at a safe distance and in an awkward position. Make sure that both of his hands are always in clear view. If possible, order the criminal intruder to do the following:

1. Make him turn and face away from you so he can't see what you're doing.
2. Tell him to slowly raise his hands straight over his head. Be certain you can see his fingertips.
3. Have him slowly drop to his knees, without using his hands.
4. Once on his knees, have him cross one leg over the other.
5. Next, have him lie on his stomach with his arms at his sides.
6. Tell him to place his hands flat on the floor with his palms facing up.

Under no circumstances should you allow the criminal to get within grabbing distance of your firearm. And do not search him for any weapons. Simply keep him in this awkward position until the police arrive.

Don't engage in any conversation with the home invader. Bark out your orders firmly and confidently; let him know you mean business. Keep your finger on the trigger and aim the gun at the center of his body. Don't ever take your eyes off him, and be aware that he might have an accomplice in the house. Please read my article, handgun self defense.

Stay with the home intruder until the police arrive, but be careful about greeting the authorities with a gun (or any weapon) in your hand. The first officers on the scene have no way of knowing who is the home owner and who is the criminal. Until they sort things out, keep any weapons out of sight.



## Home invasion Defense #5: Save Any Evidence from the Home Invasion

Do not move, clean or discard anything until the police arrive and have made a full report of the incident. You don't want to destroy any physical evidence the intruder might have left behind, including fingerprints. Avoid touching anything he might have touched. Broken windows, forced locks, overturned furniture, blood, hair, dirt, mud, etc., might reveal important information about the criminal intruder.

If a member of your family was raped by the home invader, it is imperative that you do not change your clothes, comb your hair, shower, bathe, or douche before being examined by a physician. As repulsive as it may seem, it is essential to temporarily stay the way you are if you want to assist in the conviction of the attacker. Semen, hair and other samples can serve as damaging evidence against your assailant in court.

### After a Home Invasion

Whether you are the victor or the victim of a violent confrontation with an intruder, the incident will likely change you in some way. The emotional trauma of violence can either strengthen or destroy you. You may experience a variety of debilitating conditions, including denial, shock, fear, anger and depression. You may also experience eating and sleeping disorders, societal withdrawal and paranoia.

Even if you justifiably crippled or killed the intruder you may experience emotional residuals; killing another human being, even in the act of self-defense isn't easy for some people to live with and can cause insomnia, nightmares, depression, guilt, lack of concentration and anxiety.



## Criminal Awareness

One of the best ways to prepare for a home invasion is to know your enemy. In other words, you and your family should have a general understanding of criminals' motivations, mentalities, methods and capabilities to perpetrate violent acts. By staying abreast of criminal activity through the media, official crime reports, and other sources, you can gain insight into the types and trends of violent crime. Ask yourself the following important questions:

- Who was the victim, and who was the home intruder?
- What happened during the home invasion?
- Where did the home invasion take place?
- When was the home invasion committed?
- What was the primary motivation behind the home invasion (i.e., murder, burglary, rape, torture)?
- Why did the home invasion occur?
- Why that perpetrator?
- Why that house?
- And, finally, how did the criminal break in?

Answer these home invasion questions as thoroughly as you can, and you will learn a great deal about this serious and dangerous crime. You will also be obtaining an invaluable education that can protect both you and your family.

***In closing, you can prepare you and your family for a possible home invasion. However, it's going to require a bit of time and planning on your part but in the end it just may save your life.***

