



RURAL CRIME PREVENTION

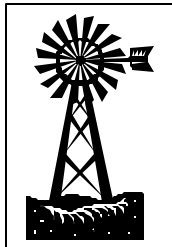
There is increasing concern regarding the growing incidence of burglary, theft and vandalism in rural areas. Whatever the reasons, these crimes have increased sharply in the past few years. Rural residents are taking steps to assist law enforcement officials in dealing with the growing problem.

One of the most effective crime prevention measures is the establishment of neighborhood organizations to maintain surveillance of local properties. The mere existence of such an organization can act as a deterrent to thieves.

Other measures a neighborhood can take are immediately reporting to law enforcement officials any suspicious persons, act, and the locations of questionable vehicles, etc. Experience has shown that three steps (organization, reporting, and marking of properties) can sharply reduce the amount of criminal activity in rural areas.

1. Identifying the Problem

Any assessment of risks involves being aware of the problem of crime as it relates to your property. This will include appreciation of the following factors:



- Similar offenses and crime trends in the locality.
- Certain crimes are more prevalent at particular times of the year.
- The marketable nature of your property.
- The ease with which property may be stolen.
- The vulnerability of existing security devices.
- The vulnerability of items to criminal damage, arson, or injury.

2. The Perimeter and Approaches

The farm perimeter is the first hurdle for a criminal to overcome. As well as making it physically difficult, it is possible to put them off psychologically.

- **Hedges:** Should be thick and difficult to penetrate. Hedges should be regularly trimmed and maintained at a height which will allow vision from adjoining properties and roads.
- **Walls:** Stone or brick walls should be inspected and well maintained. Not doing so encourages more of the same.
- **Gates:** A closed gate, particularly one both closed and secured gives a clear "Keep Out" signal and denies access by vehicles. Gates should be self closing

and double gates secured with shackled padlocks to prevent attack with bolt croppers. Have a look at the hinges. Can the gate be lifted off? Some gates are manufactured to prevent this but if not, burro over the top hinge pin or weld on a piece of metal.

- **Fences:** Good quality, well maintained fences are a must. There is little point in spending good money on secure gates if the adjoining fence can be pushed over and access gained.



SECURITY STEPS FOR RURAL RESIDENTS

Home

- Use dead-bolt locks on all entrance doors
- Fit window locks on ground floor windows and those near flat roofs and drain pipes
- Provide good lighting around your home.
- Trim shrubbery from around windows and doors
- Make your home look occupied by cutting the grass, raking leaves, shoveling snow, and picking up newspapers and mail.
- Use timers for light and radios.
- Keep a record of your valuable possessions
- Photograph your most valuable items.
- Don't advertise that you are not home by leaving garage doors open and leaving notes for traders.
- When your house is empty, ask a neighbor to keep an eye on your farm. Be prepared to do the same.
- Secure sliding glass with commercially available locks or with a broomstick or wooden dowel in the track to jam the door.
- Secure basement windows.

Self-Help Measures

- When leaving home for an extended period of time, let a friend know how long you will be gone and where you can be reached in an emergency. Do not publicize your trip.
- Request ID from salespeople and repair and service personnel who are unfamiliar to you.
- Never provide personal information to unknown callers over the phone.
- Keep family keepsakes and valuables at a friend's home during your vacation.
- Report strange vehicles and strangers on your land.
- Keep non-replaceable valuables in a safety deposit box.
- Avoid putting your name and address on your key ring.
- Maintain a list of emergency numbers.

Help Your Neighbors

- Get together with others in the community to start a Neighborhood or Farm Watch group. Involve all ages and work with law enforcement. Recruit from religious and civic groups. Use CB radios or cell phones to patrol and report suspicious activities to the sheriff or police.
- When you go away, stop delivery of your mail or newspaper or ask a neighbor to pick them up. You want to create the illusion that someone is at home and following everyday routines. Have neighbors check your property and return the favor when they go away.

Take Action!

- Educate young people about the hazards of operating farm machinery and being around livestock. For example, tractors are involved in 69% of farm machinery deaths, and young people raised on farms often operate these machines at early ages.
- If your school district doesn't have an alcohol, drug and crime prevention curriculum in place, help start one.
- Check out recreational opportunities for teens. Work with schools, 4-H, or Future Farmers to fill the gaps both after school and on the weekends.



OUTSIDE SECURITY FOR RURAL RESIDENTS

Equipment

- Never leave machinery standing in the field for long periods of time.
- Remove keys from unattended machinery or a motor part.
- Chain unattended machinery to a barrier, tree, or pole by passing a log chain through a wheel or around an axle and securing it with a case hardened lock.
- When advertising machinery for sale, be alert for thieves who might respond to the ad.
- Keep a record of serial numbers, chassis, and model numbers of machines.
- Regularly check field equipment.
- Paint your name on valuable tarpaulins in letters at least one foot high.
- Use metal engravers to mark tools, vehicles, and equipment.
- Secure gas pumps, gas tanks, storage bins, and grain elevators with sturdy padlocks or deadbolts.
- Keep guns locked and unloaded in a secure place away from children and would-be thieves.

Outbuildings

- Warn thieves you are on the alert with “No Trespassing” and “No Hunting” signs on your property.
- Light outbuildings at night.
- Close and lock all doors on outbuildings.
- Consider motion sensors that set off lights or alarms.

Animals

- Avoid penning or enclosing animals for long periods of time.
- Remove loading chutes from accessible loading sites.
- Periodically check fences to make sure they have not been cut or rewired.
- Avoid head counting animals at routine times.
- Brand animals.
- Maintain a record of any animal scars and deformities, peculiarities, marks, and characteristics for identification purposes.
- Immediately report animal losses to the sheriff.
- Avoid accepting checks from strangers for the sale of animals without verification.
- Regularly check fields where animals are grazing.
- Consider using closed circuit TV to watch animals in barns or yards.
- Mark livestock with ear tags or horn brands.
- Take photographs of particularly valuable animals.

Guard Your Crops

- Keep a record of your valuable timber. Mark each with a paint stripe.
- Keep storage areas neat and well-organized so that any theft will be noticed immediately.
- Check employee's references. Before they start, talk about your crime prevention measures.
- Store harvested crops in protected and locked locations.

Information for Outside Security for Rural Residents provided by Safe Streets Topeka/Shawnee County, 2209 SW 29th St, Topeka, KS, 785-266-4606