

Neighbourhood Support New Zealand



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Neighbourhood Support Fact Sheet

Who burgles a house and why?

People often ask, "is there such a thing as a typical burglar?" While it's difficult to exactly define the type of person who burgles a house, it's useful to have a **general** understanding of how a burglar thinks and operates.

That way you can be better informed about what you can do to reduce a burglar's opportunities and, in turn, help prevent burglary.

To help make your property and possessions safer from the risk of burglary, New Zealand Police and Neighbourhood Support New Zealand have developed the following information about who burgles a house and why.

Who am I?

- I can be male or female and I act on easy or tempting opportunities
- I burgle houses during the day or night - especially when I can see no one's home or the risk of being seen or caught is low
- I may operate alone or with other people I know
- I may be on foot or could use a vehicle to cruise and check out your neighbourhood looking for those easy or tempting opportunities
- I often burgle one or more nearby houses in the neighbourhood
- I generally don't stray too far from my home. I like familiar territory such as the routes to work, school or a friend's place.
- I'm always on the look-out for opportunities along the way, but I won't burgle too close to home in case someone recognises me.
- I may look out of place in your neighbourhood, but few people take note of my activity or even ring the Police to report suspicious activity

Why do I pick your place?

- I like houses where it looks like no one's home - lights aren't on at night, curtains may be drawn during the day, or mail and newspapers have been left to accumulate in the letterbox.
- I like houses where a window or door is left open or unsecured
- I like houses where people can't see what I'm doing from the street. Trees and shrubs may block the view
- I like houses that have alleyways running beside them or back onto parks, reserves or green belts

- I like houses where items of value are left outside overnight, like a bike
- I like houses where the garage door is open, I can see your car isn't there and there's something valuable inside, like a lawnmower
- I like houses I've been to before. I know the layout, what's in them and how to get out.
- If I've burgled a house once, it's likely I'll try it again when valuable items have been replaced.

If something about a house catches a burglar's eye, then s/he is more likely to attempt a burglary right away or note it for later.

How do I operate?

- I'm usually looking for cash or small, valuable items I can quickly convert into cash such as jewellery, videos and stereo equipment
- Often I'm stealing to order and may have a car nearby to help with my 'get away'
- I usually sell stolen property to people who like to buy things cheaply
- I may go onto a property and knock on the door to see if anyone is home
- If someone is home, I normally make up an excuse for being there. For example, I'm looking for my dog or a nearby street
- I try to get in and out of your home as quickly and quietly as possible
- Sometimes I hide your property nearby and come and get it later

What don't I like?

- Houses with alarms
- Neighbours who support each other, talk to each other and take an interest in what's going on around them, particularly people they don't know or haven't seen before
- Neighbours who report suspicious activity to Police and are able to give good descriptions of who and what they've seen
- Dogs or guard dog signs on fences and gates
- Houses with good locks on doors, windows and other entry points
- A vehicle in the driveway
- Lights, TV or stereo on
- People who mark valuable property with serial numbers and keep a record of those numbers