

SKY VALLEY WATCHDOG

*This column comes from our Newsletter readers. Opinions stated here are those of the authors, but we do think that they deserve our readers' attention. Thanks to **Harry Cline** of newcaregiver.org for this overview of home security.*



7 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO MAKE YOUR HOME MORE SECURE

We face potential threats every day, and some of us even face potential threats inside the home. Everyone deserves to feel safe inside his or her home, especially domestic violence survivors who have toughed out a difficult situation and relocated to a safer situation. Nobody wants to live in fear, but there are adjustments we can make to our living situations to help us feel safer. Depending on your additions, you could even increase your home's [overall value](#).

The Sky Valley Homeowners Association has asked me to summarize budget-friendly security features and modifications that you can incorporate into your home, and I offer seven of these below.

Friendly Neighbors

A simple but effective concept, getting to [know your Sky Valley neighbors](#) means that you have people looking out for you. Offer to keep an eye on your neighbors' properties, and ask them to keep an eye on yours. Ask them to give you a call or text if they see anything suspicious around your house. Reciprocated favors or an organized [neighborhood watch](#) benefits everyone and provides a secure community where you'll never feel truly alone. Here in Sky Valley, where neighbors may not be close, this could take some effort, but it will be worth it.

Extra Locks

Most doors come with two locks and a chain or door guard, but you can add another layer of security to your entrances by installing extra [locks](#). The more you have, the harder it is to breach. A security gate outside the property also creates an additional barrier between the street and your home.

Secured Doors and Windows

If your door is easy to kick down or your window is easy to break, then consider having them replaced with more durable materials or use reinforcements like a [door jammer](#). Avoid having windows near door handles so that potential intruders can't break the windows and unlock the door from the inside.

Window Covers

If you're concerned about being watched from outside, then keep your windows covered. It might be tempting to let the natural sunlight in every day, but your safety is more important than the lighting in the room. You can also consider hiring a landscaper to plant trees and bushes around the property to provide a [privacy hedge](#) that will allow you to leave the curtains open.



Photo Credit: Pexels

Outside Lights

Speaking of lights, keep your home well lit outside at night. Not only will [external lights](#) deter intruders from sneaking around your property, but you'll also be able to see anything that does make it onto the property. **But remember that Riverside County Codes don't permit lights that shine off your property.**

Alarm System

The tried-and-true method for deterring intruders is an [alarm system](#). Simply having signs outside your property announcing an alarm system can stop anyone from attempting to get inside your home, but a noisy alarm will alert the neighborhood, the security company, and the police. There are many options for alarm companies to choose from, and the [average cost](#) to install an alarm system is \$1,400, which includes monitoring. There's a monthly or annual fee to use the service as well, but it's a small price to pay for safety.

Security Cameras

Home security systems used to be alarms with motion sensor detectors or clunky cameras in the corner of the room. Now you can install a small camera just about anywhere — on the front porch, on a windowsill, inside the room, above the garage. The camera sends you [alerts](#) when it detects activity on your property. These cameras are easy to install and move, and you can view the footage from your phone or computer. You can choose which footage you want to keep or delete. Saving footage of an incident can be helpful for evidence in future legal cases.

You don't have to be afraid to live alone. Your independence should bring you freedom from fear of violence at home and freedom to come and go from your house without worrying about what's waiting when you return. Reclaim your sense of safety at home by making your place more secure.