

Sarah,

Thanks for contacting us at Mid-America Crime Free, Inc. (MACF). I will try to help you the best I can. MACF is a group of people who are involved in the Crime Free Multi-Housing program and does not sell products; however, we do work closely with companies that offer products that have been tested and have been found to work as advertised or better. One of those products is Jambbrace® which reinforces the door jamb. I have been an officer for more than 22 years and I have seen a lot of burglaries, including structures that had alarms or dogs. Most burglaries are in the day time when most of us are at work and the burglar usually kicks open the front, sometimes the back door. Pried doors are much rarer but this product will defend against both types of force. The door jambs on most houses are made from ¾ inch pine or fir woods which are weak and will split with the grain easily when force is applied. I have seen this too many times to count. This product reinforces the door jamb. I was so impressed with this product I installed it on my house on all exterior doors. It does such a good job that if someone applies force to your door, the door itself will split on the end, or your deadbolt will break if it is not a quality one. \$15 deadbolt locks are worthless. You may have to spend \$40 to \$100 to get a good dead bolt lock, but what are your house and its contents worth? One affordable dead bolt lock that has been found to hold up well under force is the Kwikset Ultramax® lock. Schlage and Master also make good locks. Whichever lock you chose; consider getting an ANSI grade 1 lock. This is usually a commercial grade lock, but can be used in the home. An ANSI grade 2 lock is okay, but I would avoid a grade 3 lock. To protect the door edge, one of those metal edge guards will do the job nicely. Even the short one will work fine; this is what I have on my house. It will help tie the front and back faces of your door together. Use this on any door, including metal doors since they have a seam or wooden core and will also fail.

The reason I start with this is that most people rely on alarms to do too much. They were designed to tell you someone has entered your structure. We would prefer they not gain entry in the first place. The vast majority of burglars will not spend much time trying to gain entry. They want fast access to valuables so they can get some quick drug money. Usually, they will not spend any more than 5 to 7 seconds trying to force a door open. You can still use an alarm if you prefer, but I would focus on the doors first.

There are personal alarms on the market, but I must admit, I do not know much about them. I am also sending this to a couple of guys I work with who may have some ideas for you.

Thank you,

P.O. Don Smarker
KCPD-North Patrol
Crime Free Multi-Housing Program
1001 N.W. Barry Road

11/29/2007