

# Preventing Arson & Vandalism



Crime and Violence Prevention Center • California Attorney General's Office

## What can you do?

Many of the same precautions taken to discourage burglars may also discourage arsonists and vandals. By taking a few preventive steps, you can help curb these crimes.

### Improve general security

- Secure all doors, windows, skylights — especially entrances on alleys.
- Install an alarm system.
- Don't allow landscaping to provide camouflage or hiding places. Keep the building windows visible and well-lighted.
- Keep your property well-lighted at night.
- Be watchful of strangers and immediately report suspicious actions near homes, schools, vacant buildings, businesses or other structures.
- Ask your neighbor to keep watch over your business while you are away.

### Add fire prevention

- Install smoke alarms, automatic and tamper-proof sprinklers, and other fire safety equipment.
- Clear your premises of fuel sources such as yard trimmings, newspapers, leftover paint, old rags and other trash.
- Keep storage and other infrequently visited areas secure.
- Secure flammables in a locked fire-resistant cabinet.
- Dispose of all flammable waste materials as quickly as possible. (Check with local authorities for approved methods of disposal).
- Establish frequent and regular fire patrols.
- Maintain an efficient emergency plan program.
- Educate employees about arson prevention program.

### Remember ...

It is very difficult to catch an arsonist. Cooperation between citizens and government agencies is a key weapon against arson.

- Report any information you have that would help in the investigation of arson-suspected fires.
- Protect property you own or occupy from would-be arsonists.
- Support efforts to investigate, apprehend, and prosecute arsonists.

If you have information which may help apprehend an arsonist, call your local law enforcement agency.

## **Vandalism prevention**

Most vandalism occurs in the evenings and on weekends — so set up prevention techniques accordingly.

- Post anti-vandalism signs as a deterrent.
- Schedule custodial crews at night.
- Provide incentives for reporting vandalism.
- Keep local law enforcement agencies informed about acts of vandalism to property.
- Repair damage promptly — the sooner you repair vandalism, the less chance there will be more vandalism.

## **Encourage community participation**

Use newspapers, radio and television to mobilize the community to be concerned and to watch for vandalism and arson.



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