

Type of lock is important in home security

The following column is another in a series written for the Farmington Observer by Chris Cogger, a technician with the Farmington Hills Police Department's Crime Prevention Unit.

The door is one of the most vulnerable points of access into the home, and while some burglaries may occur through an unlocked door, many others involve forcible entry.

In 20 percent of all homes burglarized in Farmington Hills during 1984, entry was gained when the burglar forced open an exterior door. For that reason, residents should not overlook this area when evaluating their security needs.

The majority of homes use a common, key-in-knob, spring-latch lock. When the door is closed, the latching

device is automatically sprung, which, in turn, holds the door shut. Although these locks may appear to be secure, they offer minimum security, and most can be easily opened with varying degrees of effort.

Many key-in-knob, spring-latches can be quickly opened by simply slipping a plastic credit card, knife or sharpened screwdriver between the lock and the doorjam. This method of entry trips the spring-operated latch of the lock, which then



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opens the door. In order to prevent the lock from being opened in this manner, other key-in-knob spring locks incorporate an auxiliary plunger-like device, commonly known as a dead-locking latch.

TO FUNCTION effectively, these locks, along with the strike plate on the door jam that accepts the latch, must be properly installed so that the plunger of the dead-locking latch is depressed to lock the bolt when it meets the strike plate. Any slight deviation could prevent the dead-locking latch

from engaging properly, defeating its purpose.

Of equal concern, both these locks can be easily forced with a hammer, pipe or crowbar. Once the knob of the lock has been broken off, the security mechanism becomes easy prey to even the most inexperienced burglar.

Since the key-in-knob type lock can be defeated in less than five minutes with no great skill, it should be replaced or backed up with better locking hardware. The best defense for a good solid exterior door is a quality single-cylinder deadbolt lock.

The double-cylinder deadbolt, which uses a key on both sides of the door, can be threat to safety or life and is not recommended by the Farmington Hills Police Department. Due to its design, in panic situations when every second counts, such as a fire, the double-cylinder deadbolt might cause confusion and loss of vital time.

FOR SUFFICIENT security, the single-cylinder deadbolt lock should meet the following criteria:

- The bolt should be of case-hardened steel or contain a hardened steel insert. It must extend a minimum of one inch into a heavy metal strike plate, which has been securely fastened into the doorjam and wall frame with screws that are over 2 1/4 inches in length.

- The deadbolt should contain a sol-

id metal free-spinning cylinder guard that is tapered to prohibit twisting or wrenching of the lock with pliers.

- The connecting screws and screw heads that hold the lock together should be made of case-hardened steel and be located on the inside of the lock to prevent the burglar from simply unscrewing the lock. These screws must be at least one-fourth of an inch in diameter and fit into a solid metal stock instead of screw posts.

- No lock is foolproof, but it can cost a burglar more time to complete his task. With the numerous locks on the market, it is wise to do your homework before making your choice. Research consumer magazines and if you are still unsure, seek out a reputable locksmith who has your concerns and needs in mind.

recreation news

Each week, the Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation Division will present a synopsis of upcoming activities in this column. For more information about division programs, call the office at 474-8115. To discuss Farmington Hills City Council agenda items, call the division newsline: 474-3838.

CROSS COUNTRY SKI CLINICS — The recreation division, along with the Detroit Free Press, is sponsoring five

cross-country ski clinics for your enjoyment this winter. The clinics will be held on the following Saturdays, at the Glen Oaks Ski Center, from 8:30-10 a.m., Jan. 11, 18, 25 and Feb. 1 and 8. The fee is \$10 per participant per clinic and includes equipment rental, hour lesson and open skiing for half the day. The fee is \$5 with your own equipment.

CPR — This American Red Cross course is a nine-hour comprehensive class and refresher course. The session

will run Tuesday, Jan. 21, Thursday, Jan. 23 and Tuesday, Jan. 28. Classes will be held at Duncel Middle School from 7-10 p.m. The class fee is \$5 and includes books and handouts. Registration is required for this class.

GIRLS' BASKETBALL — Registration is being accepted for girls in grades 9-12 for an informal basketball league that will be played on Saturdays. The program will run eight

weeks beginning Saturday, Jan. 11. A \$15 registration fee can be paid at the recreation office. The deadline to register is Friday, Dec. 27.

SKI LESSONS — The recreation division will offer cross country ski lessons at the Glen Oaks Ski Center. Lessons will be available on the weekends for beginners and intermediate skiers at 10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. All lessons are 1 1/2 hours long. The fee for the les-

sons will be \$11 including ski rental, \$6 with your own equipment. Register at the recreation office.

ICE SKATING — Learn to ice skate or improve your skating techniques. Classes meet for 30 minutes once a week for six weeks beginning Tuesday, Jan. 7 at 7:30 and 8 p.m. for adults and Saturday, Jan. 11 at 3:30 p.m. for children. Rental skates are available. All lessons will be held at Beech Woods

Arena, and the class fee is \$25.

YOUTH BAND — Individuals in grades six to eight are offered the opportunity to play in a concert band which acquaints them with contemporary musical literature. Lessons will be on Thursdays, 4-5 p.m., at Duncel Middle School beginning Jan. 9 and continuing until March 20. Participants can register at the recreation office; fee is \$13. All participants must furnish their own instruments.

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