



10 Keys to Remodeling or Construction Security

Home remodeling or renovation projects are as exciting as they are challenging. But, whether you're making changes to your home or business, you'll eventually have a team of contractors and workers accessing your place - increasing risk to your home or business security. Vendors, materials, and equipment on your property can pose yet another security risk.

Remodels increase value to property but making changes to a building structure often create vulnerabilities in security. According to the National Equipment Register (2019), up to \$1 billion in equipment, materials, and appliances are stolen from construction sites each year (residential and commercial); less than 25 percent of that is ever recovered. Besides suffering break in and burglary or theft, valuables are can be pilfered and property vandalized during construction.

Of course, some remodeling projects expose you to greater risk than others. By educating yourself to these possible security risks, you can take action to to protect your property during the construction period inside and outside of your home or business.

1. Hire a Trusted Contractor

Finding a reputable and trustworthy contractor is the first step to ensuring a secure remodel. Like many other industries, word-of-mouth recommendations from people you trust are often the best advertising for a contractor.

- These days, doing your own informal check should be part of your research - check websites, social media (Facebook, Yelp and Linked in are often good platforms to learn more and see previous work projects), and other professional services to make sure your contractor is credible.
- Ask previous clients if they would recommend the contractor.
- Some considerations to your contractor's credibility: Do they belong to any professional associations or civic clubs? What is his or her education and experience? What is the contractor's process - do they communicate well; do they answer questions honestly?
- Your contractor should also have tips and a process to keep your home secure during the renovation; ask how they plan to ensure security and safety.

2. Do You Have a Security System?

- If you don't have a current security system in place, this is a good time to consider investing in one, especially if your construction exposes areas of your home or business. Your investment now will benefit your sense of security overall.
- If you have a security system, the remodel may also affect the way your security system works. Before demolition work begins, consult your security provider to make sure your system will continue to work effectively during construction and what your options are if adjustments need to be made. You may also want to contact your provider if your remodel adds new rooms or other places that will need to be secured.

3. Change Your Locks

- An ideal solution to door locks is a keyless entry system. You'll be able to program specific combinations for specific vendors depending on the construction schedule (and delete them upon completion). You may also be able to program your doors to be locked/unlocked during certain hours. Keyless entry systems will also keep you notified of who is coming and going; the system may also give you the ability to lock and unlock doors with your mobile phone.
- Re-keying all your doors to one universal key is not a recommended solution. Traditional keys are too easy to duplicate; you will not want strangers gaining access to all of your door with one key.
- Depending on the renovation location, consider using locks and keys for the work area that are different from the rest of your home or business.
- When your remodel or renovation is complete, think about changing your locks if you aren't using keyless entry. Make sure to reprogram or delete unnecessary entry codes on a keyless entry system. The potential exists for anyone given a key or code to use it later or give it to someone who may return to burglarize your property.

4. Monitor with Motion Sensors

- If your home or business is equipped with motion sensors, burglars will generally flee once the alarm goes off. If your remodel work requires disabling your electricity, ask your security provider about a wireless system for the area or the entire building. Most wireless motion sensors let you monitor your home via your mobile phone.

5. Light It Up

- Motion sensor lights along with general outdoor lighting are always considered a pair of great deterrents to burglars even if you are not remodeling. Burglars

more likely to leave once the lights go on and light up the area; lights let them know you are monitoring your security and have taken action to prevent crime.

- If motion lights aren't feasible, make sure to turn on outside lights to brightly illuminate the work and storage areas and anywhere else equipment or material is left. Protect hidden areas and all entry ways with outdoor lights.
- Think about flood lights around the perimeter of your property; this may be more practical for commercial remodels. If your construction involves scaffolding and tarp, be aware this makes excellent hiding places. Flood lights are generally brighter and will keep your perimeter well-lit. Place perimeter lights so that they light up every possible hidden and blind spot around your home or building.

6. Surveillance Cameras

- We recommend video surveillance as part of your home security system - and when your home is undergoing a renovation; if you can't be there to oversee construction, video surveillance is a good way to monitor activity. We hope that all your vendors are trustworthy, but cameras will catch anyone's unwanted behavior as well as any burglar breaking into your home or business.
- The mere presence of surveillance cameras act as deterrents on their own; the footage helps law enforcement follow-up on a crime.
- Often, camera surveillance systems allow you to watch what the video cameras capture in real time. The ability to watch live and recorded footage make home or commercial camera systems a powerful security measure, regardless of a remodeling project.

7. Store Your Valuables

- The exposed areas in the structure that once kept these items safe create a security risk, including valuable paperwork and documents.
- Decide what you want to store; depending on how much you are storing, a locked or bio-security safe can provide a good solution.
- Put the safe in a locked room or area where workers won't have access. Bolting the step is a further step to keep it safe especially if it's something they can easily carry.
- Larger valuables can be stored in a locked room, a separate locked garage, a rental storage space, or possibly at a family or friends house. Chain and lock bicycles and other items in your garage.
- If possible, keep the work area clear of all your valuables and other family belongings with sentimental value - these are usually not replaceable. Keeping these items locked up and out of sight decreases any criminal temptation.

8. Tidy Construction Site

- As with normal home security, a messy and unorganized-looking front yard or driveway invites crime; so does a messy construction site.

- Make sure you have discussed a clean up routine with your contractor. Then your contractor and his crew need on the same page about cleaning up after their day's work. Not only putting equipment away but sweeping any driveway or walkways of debris.
- Certain debris items, such as copper wiring and certain materials from appliances, are attractive to thieves. Your contractor should be aware of the materials thieves look for from construction sites and store or dispose of them properly.
- Contractors should lock up all materials and tools to prevent theft or accidents (tripping over or slipping on something). Tools that can be packed up and taken each night, should be. Tools lying on the ground are an invitation for theft; materials not secured away beg to be carted away.
- Securing construction equipment and tools is also important so they cannot be used to enter your home or business.

9. Safety Rules for the Family

You may plan to live in your home during renovation, so be sure to create safety rules for your family.

- Have a designated safe place for your children to play and do their homework. They should know what rooms are safe and what rooms or areas are off limits, as well as the dangers of certain sharp tools and power tools.
- This could also be a time to educate your children about strangers as there will be unfamiliar workers in and around your home.

10. Temporary Fencing

- For commercial remodeling, there may be municipal laws and regulations for sites to comply with building safety codes and occupational health and safety codes. This may include fencing to keep people from wandering onto the site and getting hurt. Temporary fencing can also be a significant security measure for a home remodel.
- If your home or business remodel is significant, consider temporary fencing as a first line of defense to your security system. This may also be a consideration if you plan not to live in your home during construction. An unoccupied home with a large exposed area can give easy access to burglars.
- In the same vein, a large unprotected site makes all the materials and equipment unsecured from burglary or vandalism or other damage.
- Temporary fencing can discourage strangers and vehicles from entering the premises and trespassing. While they are unlawfully trespassing, it also prevents you from liability of injury occurring on your construction site.
- If you do consider fencing, keep these points in mind: the fence should be high enough to deter climbing over. It should also not allow access from underneath. The fencing should be able to hold up against strong wind and other

unpredictable weather conditions. Any gates and fence joints should be securely connected as they can pose vulnerabilities. Gates should be lockable.

Putting it All Together

If you already have a security system, you're ahead of the game. California Metro Patrol can beef up your security system to make sure you are fully covered while your remodel takes place, and then help expand your system into any new areas. Maybe you've decided that your remodel is a good time to install a new home security or commercial security system.

Planning a home remodel or renovation takes a lot of logistics and planning. Keeping your home or business building secure should be on that list. Don't hesitate to contact us to help you assess security during your remodel. We'll provide a no-obligation site assessment and quote. From the perimeter of our property to its interior, we can help design a system that makes your home or business safe and secure during your renovation and after. (Email: info@californiametropatrol.com Call: 888-788-0813.)

Stolen Items from Home Remodel Sites

Things that are often stolen include items that you always consider as targets, like jewelry, money, building materials, and tools. But it's becoming more common for burglars to take items homeowners may not always consider as something that may be valuable. Many of the items below are starting to show up in burglary reports.

- **METALS** - Copper wiring and pipes. The rise in copper prices and the ease of recycling it for good money make it desirable for thieves.
- **BRASS FIXTURES** and plumbing fittings for the same reason as the copper.
- **APPLIANCES AND EQUIPMENT** - These are expensive and can be an easy target when left unsecured at the job site for days at a time before being installed. John Deere is the most targeted equipment brand.
- **VINTAGE** or historical fixtures and building materials.
- **LUMBER** - Lumber, like tools and small supplies, tends to go missing a little bit at a time. Some unscrupulous workers see the job as a free source of a few pieces of wood here and there for personal use or for side projects. Take note of anyone regularly staying late or arriving early.
- **PERSONAL ITEMS**
 - High tech home electronics.
 - Sensitive paperwork and personal info, credit card information, social security numbers and anything that may be used to commit fraud or identity theft.
 - Firearms. Unlocked firearms and ammunition are always a target for burglars.
 - Diesel fuel and gas.

Just the use of personal items, such as the use of your computer for illicit activities, or people eating your food, napping in your bed, etc. can be considered theft - or at least, is upsetting to homeowners.