

Home Hardening: How to Fortify Your Domicile Against Intruders

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“The poorest man may in his cottage bid defiance to all the forces of the Crown. It may be frail – its roof may shake – the wind may blow through it – the storm may enter – the rain may enter – but the King of England cannot enter – all his force dares not cross the threshold of the ruined tenement!”

– William Pitt

Castle doctrine has its roots traceable to the English common law, specifically the [Semayne’s Case](#), 5 Coke Rep. 91 (1604). Sir Edward Coke, the Attorney General of England, reported that:



“The house of every one in his castle, and if thieves come to a man’s house to rob or murder, and the owner or his servants kill any of the thieves in defence of himself and his house, it is no felony and he shall lose nothing.”

This is what now would be called justifiable homicide, yet the concept of using lethal force to defend one’s home, as is evidenced by this case, is about 400 years old. [Stand-your-ground laws](#) negate any [duty to retreat](#), as enumerated in [Texas Penal Code §§ 9.41 – 9.43](#); the 2007 [Joe Horn shooting](#) in Pasadena involved the direct application of castle doctrine, and thankfully, the grand jury issued **no bill** against Joe Horn for killing the two burglars.

Interestingly enough, the 1604 *Semayne* case also contained a prohibition against government for violating the castle doctrine, as well. Sir Coke reported the following:

*“In all cases where the King is party, the sheriff may break the house, either to arrest or do other execution of the King’s process, if cannot otherwise enter. But **he ought first to signify the cause of his coming, and make request to open the doors.** Where the door is open the sheriff may enter, and do execution at the suit of a subject, and so also in such case may the lord, and distraint for*

his rent or service. **It is not lawful for the sheriff**, in request made and denial, at the suit of a common person, **to break the defendant's house**, to execute any process at the suit of a subject. The house of any one is only a privilege for himself, and does not extend to protect any person who flies to his house, or the goods of any other which are brought there, to prevent a lawful execution and to escape the process of the law: in such cases after request and denial, the sheriff may break the house. **If the sheriff might break open the door to execute civil process, yet it must be after request is made.**" [emphasis added]

Notice that castle doctrine is not just a general prohibition against street criminals, but also a specific prohibition against "law" enforcement, which regulates them to produce a real cause to damage someone's home, and even then, they are further restrained to only commit such damage in the pursuit of a fugitive. An individual who uses force against the government's police raids is justified in doing so pursuant to [Texas Penal Code § 9.31\(c\)](#). All of this crap where the SWAT teams come in and straight up kill people's pets is not only unconscionable, but also quite indicative of the political situation Americans face, whether that manifest itself in the form of [dragnet wiretapping](#), [civil asset forfeiture](#), or [political prisoners](#), each of which is indicative of **textbook tyranny**.

Whether it be private or public criminals, the law is clearly on the side of the homeowner; the only real question left to answer is, **how does one go about hardening their home against forceful invasions?** I would suggest that the [private production of security services](#) is rather pronounced in the technology that has been invented within the home security industry. Products have been developed that serve as either add-ons to pre-existing building structures, or as renovation projects that might also improve a home's resale value.

Windows are, probably, the single most vulnerable point in any building. They can break quite easily if just enough force is used, preferably at its weakest point, which would be at the center of the pane. Obviously, the only real problem for burglars is that this creates undesirable noise, yet, if a gang has converged on a single locale for a "breaking and entering" operation, then noise might be considered a lower priority for them.

[Safety and security window film](#) is the retrofit option, given that it can be applied to pre-existing windows. [These films range in price from \\$20 – \\$50 per roll](#), depending on size and quality. The other type of product would be to invest in some type of [safety glass](#), and then have that installed as part of the building, thereby replacing the original windows. Any sort of [bulletproof glass](#) is going to range from [several hundred dollars to a few thousand dollars](#), at least. Before investing in either option, be sure to watch demonstrations of how effective these types of security windows really are; I personally recommend watching the demonstrations of [3M's window film](#) and [Innotech's security glass](#).

Next up would be the doors and entryways into the structure in question. Second only to windows in terms of vulnerability, door manufacturing really **hinges** on quality (pardon the pun!). Solid core doors are preferable, but [the norm appears to be hollow core](#), simply because they are lighter, cheaper, and easier to install than solid core.

Generally speaking, you either need to add a door brace of some kind, or replace the door itself. The [Katy Bar](#), or better yet, [the OnGARD](#), are bracing options that do entail some modification to either the door frame or the floor for installation; they cost [\\$225 – \\$325](#) & [~ \\$100](#), respectively. [Timber Composite Doors](#) appear to be quite resistant to leveraging and brute force, and they range in price from [£1,047 – £1,566](#) (\$1,528 – \$2,285).

Most criminals wouldn't think of barraging through walls, but some types of material can be susceptible to [sledgehammers](#) and [reciprocating saws](#), especially drywall. The only real defense I can think of would be to construct a [cinder block retaining wall that is reinforced with rebar and concrete](#). The [average cost per cinder block is approximately \\$2](#), a [Weyerhaeuser ½" by 10' rebar](#) cost about [\\$4 – \\$5](#), and an [80lb. bag of concrete mix](#) cost about [\\$4](#); from these base prices, you'd have to multiple how many cinder blocks, rebar, and cement bags you'd

need to construct a retaining wall, in regard to both its length and height. Obviously, the additional costs of water, masonry tools, and possibly sand ought to be budgeted in, as well.

Unlike [caper movies](#), most robbers are not cat burglars. I honestly wouldn't worry about your roof, unless you have a skylight, in which case the aforementioned options for windows should handle any conceivable vulnerability. Given the time and effort involved in vertical ascent, presuming that SWAT teams are going to puncture through the roof and rappel down is just plain silly; [actual police raids are much more horizontal](#).

When it comes to early warning systems, I think way too much faith has been placed in technology. Alarms and especially surveillance cameras give a false sense of security, and they can be easily defeated by "black hat" hackers, or otherwise be rendered ineffective during a black out or grid-down scenario. My recommendation is that you get a dog; [according to Hans-Hermann Hoppe](#), humanity experienced an evolutionary development in enforcing property rights when wolves became domesticated and were bred for human service.

Regarding boobytraps, it's preferable to focus on emplacing uncomfortable barriers rather than painful contraptions. For example, [Eric English said he intended to plant blackberry bushes underneath his first floor windows](#); not only would he have a source of food, but those plants would serve another purpose in deterring would-be looters. Any type of [prank](#) could be adapted for home security, especially if it were concentrated in a bottleneck within the structure's very own architecture, such as a narrow hallway or a staircase.

Should your domicile's exterior become penetrated, having a [safe room](#) would become invaluable during such an emergency. The only real problem with such a panic room is the danger of inadvertently putting yourself in a corner, but such a vulnerability can be avoided if you simply construct an escape hatch within the safe room, which is also a [design feature that is incorporated into some modern bunkers](#). As such, having an agreed upon bug out plan with your family *prior* to a home invasion of any kind is not completely unwise, especially if constructing a panic room, or otherwise converting an area into a makeshift safe room, is not possible.

Of course, if your makeshift safe room is breached, killing the intruders becomes a very real and immediate option. Once you have taken [self-defense seriously](#), then it's just a matter of choosing your weapons and employing your techniques. [Learning how to clear rooms](#), both with and without a firearm, is invaluable should you decide to take the initiative in ridding your home of violent trespassers; ideally, you should have at least one other person helping you clear your home of intruders – all these fictional portrayals of older men clearing their houses *alone* and *in the dark* is just asinine.

Understanding how to harden your home is useless without also comprehending the strategic thinking used to implement it. Apartments are more difficult to harden than houses, and even then, you could become gypped on hardening *rented* houses if you decide to renovate the structure, and then you decide to move out not long afterwards; therefore, structural changes to windows, doors, and especially walls are really only beneficial to a homeowner. The idea here is to have a multi-layered defensive structure not unlike the layers of an onion, hence the exterior defenses of the windows, doors, and walls followed by the interior defenses of the boobytraps, safe rooms, and (presumably) firearms.

If you did a good enough job hardening your home, then during an emergency (whether that be a burglary or a police raid), you shouldn't have to kill anybody. It's important to emphasize that you should *never* let fear rule your life; so, take some time and *calmly* think through what your options realistically are, **what your budget allows**, and *act* accordingly. Privatizing security begins with *you*, the customer, providing a [market demand](#) for goods and services by beginning to take precautions with the intention of making yourself [less vulnerable to coercion](#) that potential adversaries might try to impose upon you.