Make Windows Safer and Less Inviting to Thieves
The International Window Film Association Offers Common Sense Tips for Window Security and Peace of Mind this Summer

WASHINGTON, June 17, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- The International Window Film Association (IWFA) is offering common sense tips to protect homeowners from becoming either a crime or health statistic this summer. The nonprofit group points out that glass windowpanes that surround a home's entryway and exterior create an inviting target for thieves, and with summer weather here, severe injuries can be caused from broken shards of glass from accidents around the home.

The IWFA notes that home burglaries are on the rise, according to the latest crime reports from the F.B.I., and in nearly every case, entry is through a door or window. Thieves usually target the easiest means to enter a home, like breaking through windows or the glass panes surrounding entryways.

Glass shards from an accidentally broken window can present another homeowner hazard, according to the IWFA. The National Center for Health Statistics reports that nearly two percent, or 2.6 million, of the 130 million-hospital emergency room visits in 2012 were from cuts; and a past study by the Consumer Product Safety Commission states there were over 150,000 glass-related injuries annually in the U.S. While not all of these injuries may be from broken window glass, many certainly are.

In support of a safer home environment, the IWFA is offering homeowners helpful advice on how to improve home safety to avoid becoming a crime statistic or the victim of a devastating injury that could have been prevented.

"Windows are critical to a home's design and comfort, and they need to be periodically evaluated to make sure they are both safe and effective," said Darrell Smith, executive director of the IWFA. "By taking the time now to look at your windows and address them as needed to protect your home and family, you will have more peace of mind this summer."

What areas of the home are of most concern?

The most common areas to review for safety are windows or glass used in and around doors, easily accessible windows, stairways, or wherever someone could fall through a window and injure themselves from glass shards and the height of the fall. Also locations where there are large areas of glass, such as sliding doors and picture windows.

How do I know if I am looking at ordinary glass or some type of protective glass?

Safety or tempered glass is a stronger, safer version of ordinary glass. It is often labeled and used in locations where human harm due to breakage is likely. When broken, safety glass will crumble into granules instead of dangerous shards. Laminated safety glass is often labeled or etched in one corner. Laminated glass consists of two pieces of glass with plastic in between the layers. If the glass is broken, the plastic film helps to hold the entire piece in place.

Glass that has window film or safety film adhered to it for protection is not always easily identified. Window film can be installed on glass and be visibly clear, yet offer protection and many other benefits.

A key advantage of window film is that it can hold the glass shards together after an impact and can prevent or reduce serious injury. It can also delay the length of time it takes for a thief to gain entrance by making it harder to get through the glass, which can discourage them from breaking in. Whether from manmade or natural causes, glass with applied window film can make a home safer.

Can existing windows be upgraded?

Safety / security window films are an option that can be put on any structurally sound window. When installed they are tested to the same "break safe" standards required of tempered glass, heat-strengthened glass, and laminated glass. Window film manufacturers can provide copies of the actual laboratory test reports validating that their products do, in fact, meet specific impact testing requirements.

If a homeowner is not sure what type of glass they have, a common sense approach is to seek professional advice from their local window film installer. The IWFA offers a free dealer locator for people looking for assistance.
"Our tips should serve as general guidelines for consumers. Each home is different, so to be completely sure of the correct type of glass required for your home, contact your local building regulations department and obtain the most up to date information," suggested Smith.

**About the International Window Film Association**
The International Window Film Association (IWFA) is a nonprofit organization of window film dealers, distributors, and manufacturers that facilitates the growth of the industry by providing unbiased research, influencing policy and promoting consumer awareness of the many benefits of window film. Like us on Facebook follow us on Twitter and see more information on YouTube.

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