

Toronto

How some Toronto homeowners are protecting themselves amid rise of home invasions

Home invasions up so far this year in the city compared to 2025

Nicole Brockbank, Angelina King · CBC News · Posted: Apr 28, 2026 4:00 AM EDT | Last Updated: April 28



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Riley Mulvihill credits the security film she had installed on the window beside her front door with preventing a home invasion at her Toronto home in February. (Sue Goodspeed/CBC)

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Riley Mulvihill woke up to a smashing sound in the middle of the night. Masked men were trying to break through the glass window beside the front door of her Toronto home.

"Keys! Keys! I'll kill you," said one of them on security video.

The number of home invasion victims in Toronto hit a 10-year high in 2024, with 231 victims across 149 incidents, according to Toronto police data. In 2025, the total dropped to 183 victims across 93 incidents, but the numbers are up again so far this year compared with the same point last year.

Mulvihill credits the security film she'd had installed on her front windows for keeping the would-be intruders at bay in February.

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"It absolutely is what stopped them, slowed them down, created an injury and stopped them from getting into my home," said Mulvihill, who lives in Rosedale.

"Even though they were successful at breaking the glass, the film slowed them down ... not long enough for the police to come, but long enough for them to make a decision for themselves on the risk-reward."

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How some Torontonians are protecting themselves against violent home invasions

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Installing security film, which makes window glass harder to break, is just one way Toronto homeowners are making their houses more difficult to break into amid a rise in brazen home invasions in the last few years.

Security film, which strengthens window glass making it harder to break, is just one of a number of steps Mulvihill and other Toronto homeowners have been taking to make to make their houses more difficult to break into given the rise in home invasions.

"It was just a matter of time for us," said Mulvihill.

"So mentally, emotionally, I was prepared to respond in a way that was efficient. But knowing that my children, my family, the people I love and care for the most, our lives are at risk over a car — speaks to a much broader economic-political issue."

Given residents' concerns, city councillors Dianne Saxe and Rachel Chernos Lin proposed and passed a motion last month to have Toronto police to prepare a report on home invasions and what they are doing to address the rise in these crimes.



Coun. Rachel Chernos Lin seconded a motion last month asking Toronto police for a report on home invasions after hearing concerns from residents in her ward Don Valley West. (Mike Smee/CBC)

"There's been a lot of WhatsApp groups and virtual neighbourhood watches that are being explored, making sure we have a strong community that is connected," said Chernos Lin, whose Don Valley West ward includes Lawrence Park and Leaside.

"In certain communities they're actually looking at things like — some of them have hired private security to patrol neighborhoods. And that's a concern as well, right? That we need that or that we perceive that we need that."

Police project launched to address home invasions

In response to the motion, Insp. Kristy Smith from the Toronto police's hold-up squad gave a presentation on home invasions and break-ins committed to steal vehicles to the police board on April 13. The difference between the two is whether residents were home at the time. For an incident to be classified as a home invasion, a resident must be present, according to Toronto police.

Smith said her unit launched Project AEGIS earlier this year to address a rise in home invasions and break-ins to steal vehicles in 32 Division, which includes Lawrence Park North, and 53 Division, which includes Rosedale and Leaside. Marked and unmarked police cars have been patrolling those areas overnight since February to deter and disrupt the crimes.

Mulvihill first had security film installed on some of her windows three years ago after her Ring camera caught a man walking up her driveway while she and her family were away on vacation.

After the attempted home invasion in February, she had security film added to all of her windows, installed metal gates over glass doors, metal bars over some windows, a perimeter alarm, added more cameras and created a panic room with specialized locks. Mulvihill estimates she and her husband have spent about \$20,000 on security upgrades, not including monthly subscriptions.

"The onus is now on me and my family to seek out, source, install, pay for my own individual protection," she said.

Demand for window security film 'intense'

Two GTA companies which sell window film told CBC News demand for the security measure has never been higher in the Toronto area.



Julian Herzberg used to do home security audits on behalf of Toronto police when he was an auxiliary officer, and now he's continued that work through his business Home Security Consultants. (Submitted by Julian Herzberg)

"We used to get the odd call now and then, but now it's more and more — it's intense," said Julian Herzberg, owner of Home Security Consultants.

"It's gone up over the last two years, 70 per cent, it's really gone pretty crazy ... the majority of people will always say 'my neighbour just got broken into.'"

Herzberg used to do home security audits on behalf of Toronto police when he was an auxiliary officer and says that window security film offers the best protection at an accessible cost, unless homeowners are willing to spend substantially more to replace their windows and doors.

"The breakthrough time on a 14 mil film is about four to five minutes," he said.

"These guys that are trying to break into homes know they have a very limited time to get in and out. They're not going to spend that much time."

Herzberg believes these kinds of home invasions and brazen break-ins became a bigger problem after the pandemic. He says he started his business to address the growing security concerns of homeowners.

Mulvihill wants to see a more co-ordinated effort to respond to home invasions, including more resources for police.

"The car's replaceable, my family is not," said Mulvihill.

"We really have a problem and it needs to be addressed before things get much worse."

BETA

What's one thing you've done — or would do — to feel safer at home?

18 participants

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