

U.S. Fire Administration

## National Arson Prevention Initiative



## BOARD UP PROCEDURES

**STOP** the use of empty buildings as targets for arsonists, as crack houses, as hang outs for gangs, as garbage dumps, and as temporary shelters for the homeless.

*These procedures are intended to protect buildings that are temporarily vacant pending rehabilitation and use.*

## "HARDENING THE TARGET" BOARD UP PROCEDURES

Protecting valuable buildings from the weather and from illegal entry can be accomplished by improving security, organizing block watches, improving lighting, periodic patrols, and by following these directions.

### 1. DISCONNECT ALL UTILITIES AT THE STREET

- Turn off water at the street and drain the system to its lowest point. Leave faucets open and put anti-freeze in all traps containing water.
- Have the utility company disconnect electricity at the street and remove and cap meters.
- Shut off LNG supply at the street. Disconnect and remove LPG and heating oil tanks.

### 2. REMOVE ALL FLAMMABLES AND COMBUSTIBLES FROM INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE BUILDING

- Remove all upholstered furniture, combustible materials and trash from the building, including the basement and attic.
- Remove trash and trash containers and combustible furniture from exterior stairwells, porches, fire escapes and outbuildings.
- Remove shrubbery and vegetation that could support or spread a fire.

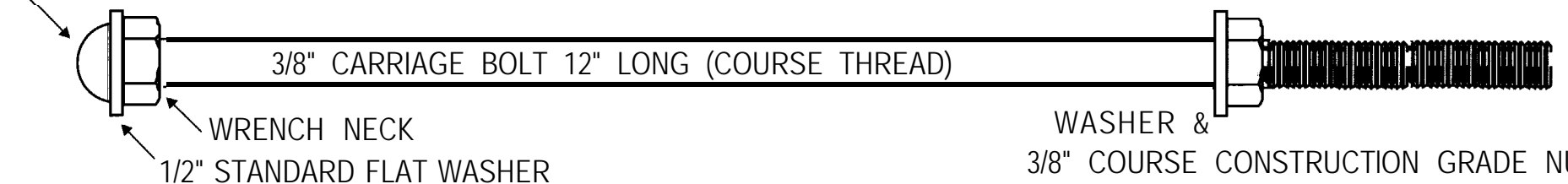
### 3. SECURE THE BUILDING TO PREVENT ENTRY

- Search the entire building to ensure that it is unoccupied.
- Remove doors and storm windows and place in storage.

## DETERMINING HOW MUCH PROTECTION IS NEEDED

- Openings in the basement, first floor doors and windows and any point of entry accessible from a porch, fire escape or other potential climbing point require additional security measures. These openings should be barricaded with plywood, 2x4s, bolts and nails.
- Openings that are at least 10' from ground level which are not accessible from a porch, fire escape, roof, or other climbing point can be secured with nails in each brace, and every 12" around the perimeter. For these openings the plywood should be fitted so that it rests snugly against the exterior frame, butting up to the siding on wood frame buildings and up to the brickwork on brick buildings. It may be necessary to remove the staff bead so this fit can be flush and tight.

NOTE: USE ROUNDED HEAD



## BOARDING UP

- Cut plywood to fit over the window and door openings, flush with outside of the molding.  
*Note: For buildings with metal door and window frames the alternative is to cut the plywood and 2x4s to fit the inside of the door frame buffed up against the band molding.*
- Cut the 2x4s to fit the horizontal dimension of the plywood. You will need two 2x4 exterior and two interior braces for each window and three sets for each door.  
*For buildings with metal doors and window frames the 2x4s for the outside will be cut to the dimensions of the plywood, fitting inside the door frame, against the band molding. For the inside the 2x4s will be cut to the outside dimension of the door or window frame.*
- Pre drill 3/8th inch holes in the plywood and the braces.
- The holes will be placed approximately 1/3 of the length of the brace from each outside edge of the door and window jam.
- The two window braces will be placed 1/3 of the distance from the top and the bottom of the window.
- The three door braces will be placed; one in the center of the doorway, and one half the distance from the center to the top and to the bottom of the doorway.

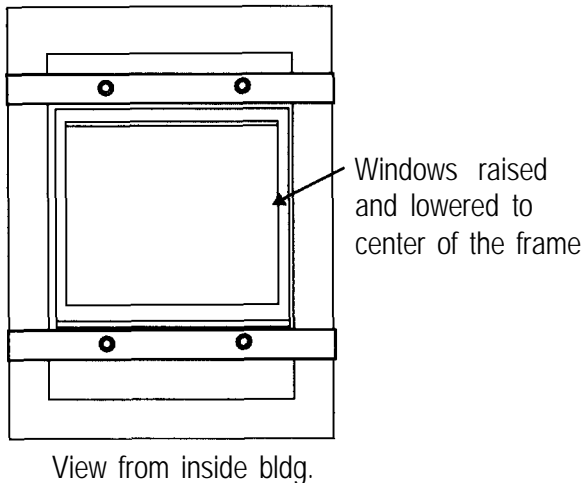
- Place the plywood over the exterior opening and nail to the frame.  
*For metal frames place the plywood and braces inside the frame against the band molding.*
- Place the 2x4 braces over the interior and exterior of the door or window.
- Place the large washer over the carriage bolt and place the bolt through the holes.
- Place washer and nut inside and tighten securely. Torque the nut so that it slightly compresses the interior 2x4.

**After all entrances are secured, the interior worker should exit the building, using a ladder, through a window, if such exists, at least 10 feet above the ground. Nail or screw a plywood sheet over the worker's exit. Patrol the building periodically to check the security.**

## MATERIALS NEEDED

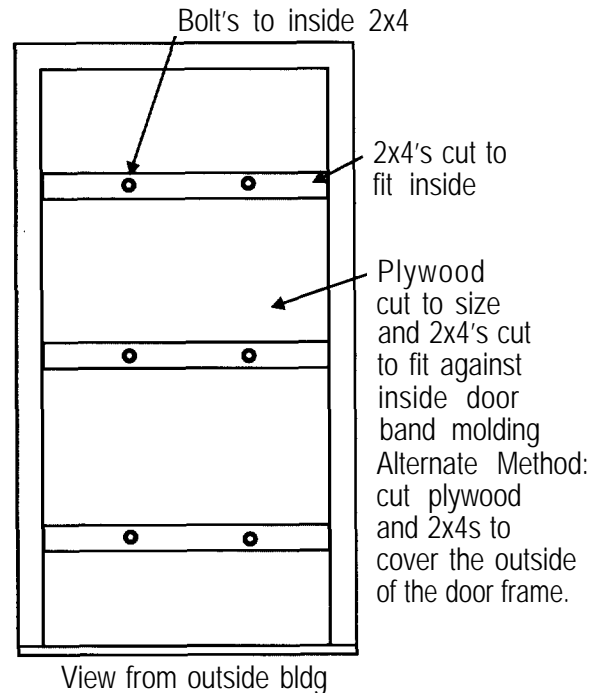
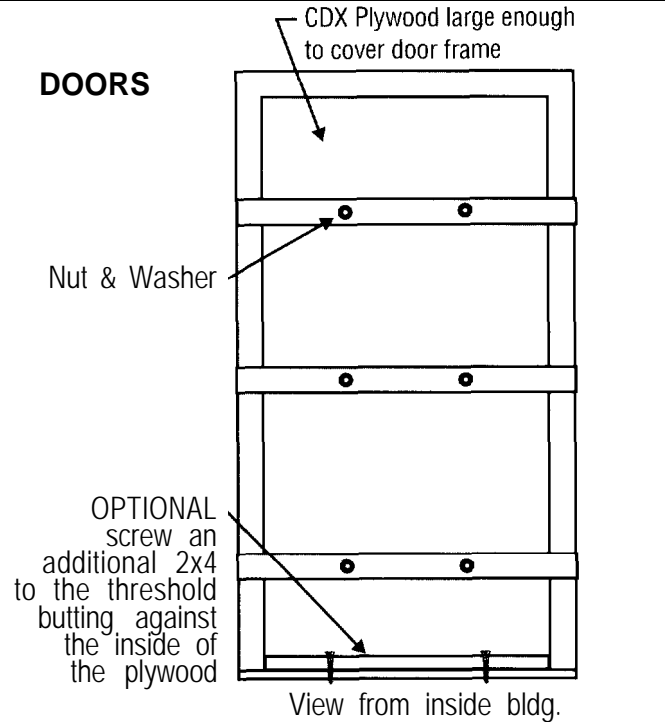
- A . 1/2" plywood, grade CDX and 2" x 4" by 8' construction grade lumber.
- B . 3/8" by 12" carriage bolts (rounded head on weather side).
- C . 3/8" construction grade nuts.
- D . Flat washers with an inside diameter large enough to bypass the wrench neck inside the carriage bolt head so no lift edge is available beneath an installed carriage bolt head.
- E . 1/2" diameter flat washers for installation beneath the nut inside the building.
- F . 1-5/8" (6d) galvanized or stainless steel ring-shank nails or comparable deck nails.

## WINDOWS



Note: Outside view of window is same as view from outside door except with two 2x4 braces instead of three.

## DOORS





**To request arson prevention materials:**

**National Arson Prevention Clearinghouse  
16825 South Seton Avenue,  
Emmitsburg, Maryland 21727  
1-888-603-3100**

*Materials available include:*

- General Arson Prevention Literature
- Video: Fighting Church Arson
- Church Arson Prevention Literature
- Arson Prevention Brochures
- Juvenile Firesetter Brochures
- Coalition Building Handbook
- Arson Threat Assessment Guides for:  
Communities, Churches, Buildings
- Information on Arson Classes and  
Courses delivered by the National  
Fire Academy

