

What is “Lock Bumping”?

Lock bumping is a method of forced entry that employs a tool called a bump key. Lock bumping is similar to lock picking; however, it is usually faster and requires far less expertise to be successful. Because bump keys are inexpensive and can be easily purchased online, this frightening phenomenon is gaining in popularity as a method by which thieves can enter homes and businesses.

History of Lock Bumping

The technique of lock bumping is not new. According to ALOA (the Associated Locksmiths of America), locksmiths have been bumping locks for about 75 years as a way to bypass damaged key cylinders. In more recent years, however, common thieves have begun to take up the practice, thanks to the wide availability of bump keys for sale online and many internet resources that provide detailed depictions of the practice. Lock bumping was first recognized as a security threat in 2002, when a German man brought it to the attention of the media. Since then, many news media and publications in the United States and around the world have reported on the issue.

How does it work?

A bump key is simply a key that has been filed down in a certain way. When the bump key is inserted into the lock and tapped lightly with an object such as a hammer or screwdriver, the lock will open. There are many videos on the internet depicting the process of lock bumping, and it is frighteningly easy to do. One television news station even showed a young child that was successful at bumping a lock after only a few attempts.

How to Protect Yourself

Because bump keys can be used to open all door locks of a certain profile, and there aren't that many different types of keyway profiles out there, most people are at risk of lock bumping. There are a number of door locks on the market today that are advertised as "bump proof." For the most part, these locks may be slightly more secure, but in many cases they only make bumping more difficult, but not impossible.

It is important to note that as of yet, there has been no standard established for what truly constitutes a "bump proof" lock.

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