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**SHATTERED WINDOWS.  
DAMAGED BUILDINGS.**  
What Can You Do to Protect Your Facility?



**S**MASH! Glittering glass sprinkles onto the road, a dangerous decoration that nobody requested. It's the third window to be broken in the abandoned building in a week, an eyesore that's getting worse by the day. Neighborhood residents have always scurried past the building, thinking if they don't look at it, they can pretend it doesn't exist. But with yet another window smashed in and more glass scattered, it's getting harder to ignore that the run-down building does exist, and it's being ransacked. People are concerned the window smashing won't be confined to the deserted building for much longer. What will happen once the vandals run out of windows to shatter in the decrepit building? Neighbors are worried the next set of broken windows will be their own. And based on The Broken Window Theory, they may be right.



# What is The Broken Window Theory?



**T**he Broken Window Theory. Written by George Kelling and James Wilson in 1982, the theory proposed that broken windows were a metaphor for disorder within neighborhoods. A neighborhood's broken window meant something along the lines of people didn't—or couldn't—care about a broken window, leading to more broken windows and defacing of that community. Kelling and Wilson also suggested that disorder and incivility within a community were linked to subsequent occurrences of serious crime.

Kelling and Wilson built upon a field study done in 1969 by Philip Zimbardo, a Stanford University psychologist. Zimbardo placed two cars without license plates

and their hoods up in two different neighborhoods: a poor one in New York City and a rich one in Palo Alto, California. In New York, destruction of the car happened quickly, within minutes. In Palo Alto, the abandoned car sat for over a week, until Zimbardo hit the car with a sledgehammer to damage it. After that, the car in Palo Alto was also destroyed. This experiment led Kelling and Wilson to pen their article in *The Atlantic* years later where they “suggested that a broken window or other visible signs of disorder or decay — think loitering and graffiti, — can send the signal that a neighborhood is uncared for. So, they thought, if police departments addressed those problems, maybe the bigger crimes wouldn't happen.”

# HOW DO I PUT THE BROKEN WINDOW THEORY INTO PRACTICE? SHOULD I?

Now that we know more about the theory, we can keep its background in mind as we continue to learn. But first, ...

SMASH! Glittering glass sprinkles onto a red carpet just inside a neighbor's entryway. It crunches together as it's swept up and placed into a paper bag, echoing the sound it first made when it rudely announced its entrance. The frustrated neighbor puts the paper bag into the trash can. They trudge outside, preparing to board up the space where the glass window used to be, and cross their fingers another one won't be shattered. It's time to make a change, and it starts with replacing the glass in the front window when it's available. Hopefully when the window is repaired, the house won't look quite so inviting to vandals. Maybe the abandoned building down the street that has been a blight on the neighborhood could use some help, too.



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# OPTIONS FOR PROTECTING YOUR BUILDING



To learn more about ditching the plywood for a better, more permanent security option, visit: [\*\*cornelliron.com/unrest\*\*](https://cornelliron.com/unrest)

While your store or building is hopefully not sporting a broken window or exterior damage like the structures in our fictional story, both are things you may be concerned about. Advice for protecting your property includes everything from keeping the property tidy with good lighting and installing cameras to purchasing a security system and using physical barriers such as fencing or shrubbery. All are good options for discouraging damage.

When in a pinch and looking for security solutions, many turn to an inexpensive, quick option: plywood. People tend to look at boarding up stores as a quick fix, with plywood being the ultimate savior: a fast, relatively cheap option for covering easily breakable glass in windows and doors. However, boarding up your store when every other store on the block and in the city wants to do the same means it can be the opposite of your expectations: expensive and time-consuming. Between securing inventory when everyone is trying to do same, arranging (and getting an appointment) for it to be set up, and then doing a similar process in reverse when not needed anymore, the benefits of plywood barriers may not actually be that beneficial.

Aside from the changes mentioned above, there are other ways to protect your building that get closer to the root of the matter—and to the structure itself. Break-resistant glass and a more protective rolling door can also be great tools.



## A MORE PROTECTIVE ROLLING DOOR?

Yep. The industry's come a long way from gatehouse doors and what we at CornellCookson used to call "float over doors" – which were the first sectional doors offered across the U.S.

No longer for concealing carriages in detached carriage houses, sectional and rolling doors today are part of an impressive array of security closures. It's easy to find a door that's practically perfect for your needs, as long as you know what you're looking for. Insulated fire doors. Max protection hurricane doors. Security grilles. Doors that can actually protect your building instead of simply being a means to closure, such as our ***Defender Series***.

Options range from good (a heavy-duty rolling door), better (StoreDefender™), and best (EntryDefender®), depending on the application. StoreDefender™ offers more protection than a standard 18-gauge heavy-duty rolling door but not as much as EntryDefender®, the only rolling door in the U.S. that meets the U.S. Department of State Standard for Forced Entry

***SD-STD.01.01.***



## AUGMENTING SECURITY WITH VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE MEASURES

When you want to deter vandals and not test the Broken Window (or Door) Theory with your own building, augmenting your security through a few different channels is best.

Instead of hastily arranging for a makeshift security option when you're stressed and strapped for time, consider other ways to protect your structure. On-demand security without the need for phone calls, appointment arrangements, and hassle exists with rolling security doors. They are immediately activated with the touch of a button, closing the door and allowing employees to leave the area safely in the event of a crisis or emergency.



Incorporating visible and invisible security measures is an intelligent way to protect your facility from break-ins and damage. Visible security such as security cameras, fencing, and even on-site security guards can deter would-be criminals. They may move on to a different mark and not want to contend with camera evidence or an altercation with a security guard just to get into the building. On the other hand, invisible or less-visible security resources like keycard and biometric scanners (if out of the public eye or behind another door in the building), and security doors and grilles can combat advanced planning from more strategic criminals. While regular doors are visible to anyone on a reconnaissance mission, security rolling doors and grilles have a secret ability. They can be easily concealed because of their design – when a rolling door or grille is not in use, it coils up into the headroom and is shrouded by the hood or ceiling. This means rolling doors and grilles have

an additional security advantage of being buried in the building's design, unlike regular man doors.

If a security option can be seen, it can be planned for and overcome in some cases. However, if a security option is hidden out of sight during business hours, it makes it harder to be planned for or defeated by someone looking to do harm, making a building safer from an unwitting thief. A holistic approach combining visual security methods to deter bad actors in the first place and invisible security methods to combat advanced planning is an intelligent solution. Taking care of the exterior of your building and the property around can help prevent broken windows, doors, or building and property damage. Because your facility won't seem like an easy target, it may have a better chance of avoiding vandalism or destruction. SMASH! This time, the splintering glass comes from knocking out what remains in the window frames of the damaged structures from last week. Gone are the plywood sheets used as makeshift windows. The neighbor's house is sporting some shiny new glass panes.

The abandoned building also has a new look...and a new sign in front. The building was purchased by a manufacturer looking to expand. They will keep the original frame of the building, but will completely renovate the interior and land around it. First on their list? Security cameras, fencing and landscaping, and a reminder to look into a heavy-duty rolling door called StoreDefender on Monday.



If you'd like to know more about visible and invisible security options or our Defender Series, contact us at:

**[cornellcookson.com/contact-us](http://cornellcookson.com/contact-us) or 1.800.233.8366**



## REFERENCES:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/broken-windows-theory>

[https://www.amazines.com/article\\_detail.cfm?articleid=4014144](https://www.amazines.com/article_detail.cfm?articleid=4014144)