



DOMESTIC BURGLARY

Using principles of crime prevention as a strategy

Top Tips:

- Don't leave your spare key where anyone can find it - under a flowerpot, on ledges, on a piece of string through the letterbox or under the doormat are the first places a burglar will look
- Keep your front garden tidy - a house that looks cared for and occupied is less likely to attract thieves. Keep bushes and hedges trimmed to less than a metre as it is difficult for a burglar to crouch below this without drawing attention to him or herself
- Don't leave valuables on view - a burglar will think of it as a shop window. And remember to keep your doors and windows locked - even if you're in the back garden
- Don't leave garden tools lying around - not only could they get stolen, thieves can use them to break into your home. Keep them locked away - whilst it's rare for burglars to enter above ground floor, ladders should still be secured to a wall bracket
- If you go on holiday, cancel milk and paper deliveries. If possible ask a trusted friend or neighbour to check your home while you're away
- Postcode property - not only does it help police return stolen items, it can put thieves off stealing them in the first place as they're harder to sell. Either scratch identification on or use an ultraviolet marker pen. Add your postcode and house number - if yours is a house name not a number add the first three letters of the name after the postcode
- These pens (from DIY stores and some police stations) use ink that shows up under ultraviolet light. Alternatively use a permanent marker if it does not matter that it shows. You can get 'post-coded property' stickers from your local crime reduction unit and some police stations
- Take pictures of valuable items like jewellery, ceramics or silverware and write down the serial numbers of electrical goods. Put a ruler next to the object as this gives a better idea of the size of the object stolen which helps police identify them if they are recovered. Make sure you keep the pictures safe, ideally leave them with a friend
- Be a good neighbour. Keep your eyes and ears open in your local community. Burglars find it more difficult to operate when people watch out for each other.
- Join a neighbourhood watch scheme or even start one up in your local community.
- If you see anyone acting suspiciously in your neighbourhood or suspect they may be attempting to break into a property call 999 immediately.

Property marking

Burglars hate marked goods. It makes it harder for them to sell on your property.

Also, property worth thousands of pounds is recovered every year by the police, which can't be returned to its rightful owners. This is simply because it cannot be properly identified.

- Visibly and permanently mark property kept in sheds and garages
- Use the self laminated stickers, available from crime reduction officers, which can be wrapped around handles, bike frames etc.

- If you move, just place an 'x' at the end of your old postcode and mark it again with your new postcode
- Advertise that you have marked your property by displaying a 'coded for keeps' sticker
- Compile an inventory of property stored in your shed/garage and do an annual check.

Garden sheds

- make sure that your shed is in good condition - that the door, door frame and walls are solid
- replace any damaged or rotten areas with new sections
- if you are in the process of buying a shed, try to place the door facing your house and not too close to a perimeter wall or gate
- consider storing valuable items in a strong lockable box or cage
- fit two closed shackle padlocks on strong padlock hasps - one a third of the way up from the bottom of the door and one a third of the way down from the top of the door
- secure padlock hasps and door hinges using threaded coach bolts with backing plates or large backing washers to prevent the bolt being pulled through the wood - not screws which are easily pulled or forced from wood
- fit key-operated window locks on the corners of all windows that open. If you never open windows, you could screw them permanently shut from the inside
- fit wire mesh or bars on the inside of your window frames
- wrap a strong chain around and through the handles of garden tools, lawn mowers, cycles etc., and secure the chain to the wall using a padlock or a ground anchor fixed to the base of the shed.

Garages

- Doors should conform to British Standard PAS 24-1- basically a solid door and frame with as little glass as possible
- Use a five lever mortise lock conforming to British Standards 3621
- Fit mortise bolts at the top and bottom
- Up and over garage doors should be secured with locks fitted to the garage base or with garage mortise bolts fitted to each side
- Tools should be kept locked away. The use of a steel box fitted to the floor would deter any theft
- If your car is in the garage it makes it harder for the thief to move around to find your property
- Ladders should be locked away or securely chained and padlocked to a strong post or wall.

Lighting

- Lighting up your garden at night can be a very successful crime prevention measure
- Fit automatically activated lights at the front and rear of your home. It is a good idea to consult a qualified electrician for advice on the type of lighting and installation
- A light activated system will come on automatically when darkness falls and switch off when it gets light. This acts as a good deterrent to burglars because it gives light all night
- A passive infra-red (PIR) light will automatically come on if it detects heat movement. This type of light is available from most DIY stores. These systems are very sensitive and

can be set off accidentally by pets or wild animals. If the light is fitted with a high wattage bulb it is important to aim the beam away from buildings and roads as it may annoy your neighbours or dazzle motorists

- Fix your outside lights where it is difficult for intruders to reach them and use the sort of lighting which has bulbs that are hard to take out.

Garden ornaments

- Secure your garden furniture using anchoring devices. These can also be used to protect expensive plants such as ornamental trees
- Use security brackets to secure hanging baskets
- Protect garden furniture and valuable ornaments by installing remote movement detectors. These are only suitable for heavy object that are not affected by wind or casual vibration.

Plants and hedges

- Consider planting prickly/thorny bushes or trees next to your fences or as an alternative. They are a visual deterrent and a physical barrier intended to complement locks, alarms and lighting
- Train a thorny climbing plant, like a rose, though a trellis on the top of your rear garden fence
- Plant prickly shrubs along the bottom of your fences or walls to discourage thieves jumping into your garden.

Fencing

- Put up strong fences to make it harder for burglars to get into your garden but make sure it has not got any features which could make it easy to climb over
- Be careful that fencing is not too high. You may be helping burglars if your fence is high enough to hide behind. They will think twice about breaking into your home if they are going to be in full view of your neighbours.

Garden gates

- Your gate should be the same height and as strong as your fence or wall
- The hinges should be securely screwed to the gateposts on the garden side and you should fit a pad bolt and padlock or press bolt on the inside of the gate.

Paths

- Use gravel or something similar. It makes a lot more noise allowing you to hear when someone is approaching.