

Home Security FACTSHEET



Your home is your castle

Unfortunately far too many householders have to experience the loss and distress of being burgled. This factsheet, produced by the UK Neighbourhood Watch Trust, for you to keep, provides simple and effective advice on home security to help you protect your home and your peace of mind.

Anyone home?

Most burglaries are committed by opportunist thieves, so with a few simple measures you can help deter thieves from targeting your home.

The first thing a burglar wants to know is whether there is anyone in. You can make it more difficult for a burglar by:

- leaving lights and/or a radio on while you are out and using a timer switch if you are away for a few days
- opening your curtains and taking in newspapers, post and milk before you leave the house in the morning
- asking your neighbours or a friend to keep an eye on your home if you are going away - perhaps they could come and draw the curtains for you and collect your post, as this will help to make your house look lived in - you can then do the same for them while they are away
- don't forget to cancel your newspapers and milk while you are away
- don't leave valuable items in view while you are out

Around the house

Windows

A third of burglars get in through a back window. Visible locks may deter some thieves as it means they have to break the glass and risk attracting attention. You can help keep out thieves by:

- fitting key operated window locks to all downstairs windows and easily accessible upstairs windows, such as those above a flat roof or a drainpipe
- gluing in slats in louvre windows so that they cannot be removed easily
- if you are replacing windows consider laminated glass

Doors

If your doors are not secure then neither is your home. Secure your doors by:

- fitting a good lock to all your doors - a five lever mortice lock is recommended
- patio doors should have special locks fitted to the top and bottom (ask for advice at your local DIY store)
- glass panels on doors are particularly vulnerable and should be replaced with laminated glass
- make sure doors and frames are in a good and strong condition
- if you are thinking of buying PVC or metal framed doors/windows, make sure they come with good built in locks and a fitted chain, as these can be expensive to add afterwards.

Alarms

Visible burglar alarms make burglars think twice. Get specialist advice and consult your insurance company to see what they recommend.

Be aware of fire risks

As with all security measures, consideration must be given to the risk of fire and means of escape. Fit a smoke detector and contact your local fire brigade for advice. If you have laminate glass on any windows and doors then remember that you will not be able to break it if you need to escape your house in an emergency and you will therefore need to make sure you have another means of exit.

**THIS FACTSHEET
INCLUDES
INFORMATION ON:**

- *How to make your home more secure*
- *How to security mark your property*
- *Neighbourhood Watch*



*Other factsheets available
in this series include
Vehicle Crime, Home
Security, Good
Neighbourhood and
Personal Safety.*

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www.neighbourhoodwatch.net
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Outside

Don't forget to secure the outside of your home:

- fit a strong lockable gate across side passages
- never leave a garage or shed unlocked
- keep expensive garden equipment locked in a shed overnight and when you are away
- keep ladders locked up so thieves can't use them to gain access to your house
- you may want to secure expensive garden plants while you are away



Lighting

Good lighting can deter a thief. Security lights which use infra red sensors and come on when movement is detected are recommended. However, any outside light that you can leave on while you are out will help. If you already have existing outside lighting you can buy sensors to convert them into a security light.

Keys

- never leave spare key in a hiding place as thieves will know where to look
- if you've recently moved into your house you may want to consider changing the door locks as other people may have keys that fit

Is your property security marked?

Security marking valuable items of property will discourage burglars from stealing them by making it difficult to sell them on. It will also help the police to trace you as the owner of your property.

You should mark your property with your postcode and the number and/or name of your house

You can security mark your property in a number of ways:

- **Permanent marking** - using an engraving tool and a stencil to mark your code on the property you want to protect.
- **Invisible marking** - write your code on property using an ultra violet (UV) pen. This mark can only be seen by using a special lamp and fades over a time so you should refresh your marking every six months.
- **Photographs** - Some items, such as jewellery and antiques may not be suitable for marking. Therefore it is a good idea to take photos of items and keep them safe with a record of any serial numbers or markings. If your property is stolen this information will help the police to recover your items.

To deter burglars you can obtain window stickers from the police or your local Neighbourhood Watch scheme, which say that you have security marked your property.

Neighbourhood Watch

In addition to making your home more secure you can also help to make your street or community a safer place for everyone who lives there by joining or setting up a Neighbourhood Watch scheme.

Neighbourhood Watch is about people working together to make their communities safer and friendlier places to live and work. The aim of Neighbourhood Watch is to help people protect themselves and their properties, reduce the fear of crime and improve their local environment. Contact your local police station to find out if your area has a Neighbourhood Watch scheme.

If you do not have a scheme in your area you can consider setting one up. The local police station will be able to help you.