

# SECURE YOUR HOME

## KEEP BURGLARS OUT



# Home Security Guide



# DON'T MAKE IT EASY FOR BURGLARS

Being burgled is a traumatic experience. It's not just the financial cost of replacing stolen items, but also the emotional impact of feeling violated after a burglar has been in your home.



Improving your home security is the best way to reduce the risk of becoming a victim. A lot of burglaries are spur of the moment, carried out by opportunist thieves who don't even have to use force – they get in through an open door or window and take their chance.

Spending money on security is a good investment and will help deter burglars from targeting your home. Your insurance policy may also become invalidated if certain measures are not taken, such as locking your doors and windows, when you go out.

As well as physical security, protecting your home by taking digital security measures is just as important.





# LOOK AT YOUR HOME SECURITY THROUGH THE EYES OF A BURGLAR

Look around your property and think about how you would break in if you locked yourself out. You may be surprised at how easy it would be.



- Have you left any windows and doors open?
- Are there any ladders that can be used to reach upper windows?
- Are there any tools laying around that can be used to force your way in?
- Can you break in without being seen by a neighbour?



# INSIDE YOUR HOME



## Doors

If your front and back doors are not secure, neither is your property. Keep them locked even when at home. Always make sure that everyone at home knows where the keys are in case of an emergency.

When having a new front or back door, always fit security accredited products as these are tested to British Standards.



External doors should be fitted with Multi-Point mechanisms and 3 star Euro Cylinders, or for wooden doors fit five-lever mortise deadlocks Kitemarked BS3621. An additional rim lock can also be fitted to wooden doors that automatically locks when the door is closed. It should enable the door be opened without a key from the inside.



# PATIO, BI-FOLD and FRENCH DOORS

Patio doors are especially vulnerable as burglars can lever doors off the tracks. When buying, ask for the sliding section to be on the inside and for anti-lift blocks to be fitted.

Multi-locking systems are recommended, or you can install mortice security bolts with removable keys at the top and bottom of both doors.

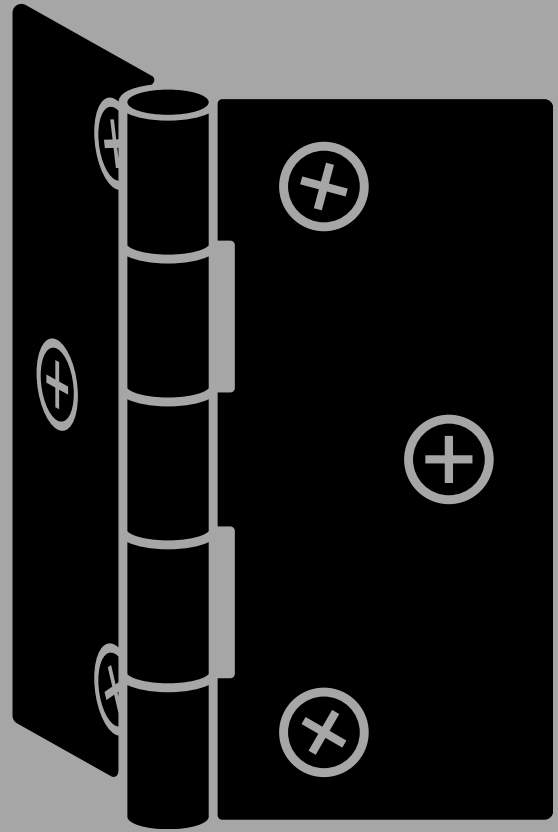
Existing patio doors can be fitted with additional security bolts to stop lifting or forced entry.

Bi-folding and French doors should be fitted with vertical top and bottom key-operated security bolts that secure the door frame from the inside.



# Hinges

Check door hinges are sturdy and secured with strong, long screws. For added security, fit hinge bolts. These are cheap and help to reinforce the hinge side of a door against force. Hinge bolts, or security hinges, are especially important if your door opens outwards.



# Letterbox

Consider fitting a letterbox defender or restrictor. This prevents burglars from poking tools through the letterbox to open latches from the inside, or reaching nearby car and house keys.

A lockable letterbox on the outside of the property is also an option.



# WINDOWS

## Windows left open are one of the most common causes of burglary

Window opening restrictors allow you to ventilate your home while preventing the window from being opened wide enough for someone to climb through. Similarly sash stops can be fitted to limit the opening of sash windows.

Fit window locks with keys to all downstairs windows and those easy to reach, for example windows above a flat roof or near a drainpipe. Window locks can be easily seen from the outside and may put burglars off, as breaking glass risks attracting attention.



Business premises will benefit from fitting security grilles to vulnerable windows, but only if these windows are not fire escape routes.

## OUTSIDE YOUR HOME

# Burglar Alarms

Many burglars will avoid breaking into a property that has an alarm. Audible-only alarms set off a siren or bell and are usually a cheaper option. Due to the number of false alarms, police will only respond if there is confirmation of suspicious activity such as a neighbour reporting they saw someone or heard glass being broken.



Monitored alarms are connected to a central 'listening' service. The monitoring company will check for false alarms and call the police if necessary. Monitored systems are particularly important for isolated properties.

## Lighting



The most appropriate form of lighting to use is high- efficiency, low-energy lighting controlled by a dusk-to-dawn switch, so the light only comes on when it's dark. Lights with movement sensors can also be beneficial.



# Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV)



Home CCTV is becoming more affordable and you can buy indoor and outdoor cameras that connect to an app on your smartphone. CCTV will not prevent your home being burgled on its own and should be used in addition to other deterrents including good quality locks, a burglar alarm and security lighting.

Cameras should be positioned for easy maintenance but high enough so they can't be tampered with. If your camera is outside, you must comply with data protection and privacy laws and make sure it isn't pointing at public spaces or other people's houses or gardens.



# Gardens, Gates and Fences

Check for weak spots where a burglar could get into your garden, for example a low or damaged fence, or a back gate with a weak or no lock.

A thorny hedge along the boundary of your property can put burglars off but make sure that passers-by can still see the front of your home so that burglars can be seen.



Burglars don't like gravel as it's noisy to walk on, so this is good to lay on paths and underneath ground floor windows. Avoid building pergolas or gazebos too near your home as they can help thieves reach upper windows.

Using anti-climb paint or fixing trellising to the top of solid fences and walls can make it more difficult for a burglar to climb over. Do not use barbed or razor wire as you could be held legally responsible for any injuries caused.



# Passageways, Garages and Sheds

Fit a strong, lockable, high gate across the passageway to stop a burglar getting to the back of your home where they can work without being disturbed.



Garages and sheds are often full of tools which are ideal for breaking into your property.

Never leave your garage or garden shed unlocked, especially if it has a connecting door to your home. A burglar could get in and work on the door inside without being seen.

Fit strong padlocks to sheds and out buildings, and make sure that the doors are solid enough not to be kicked in.

# PROTECT YOUR POSSESSIONS

## Install a Safe

Position the safe, avoiding bedrooms, so it won't be easily discovered. It should be bolted into a solid wall or floor. Home safes are also fire and insurance rated according to the type and value of items to be placed inside.



## Property Marking

Use a forensic marking solution to mark your property such as a special marker, ink or paint that is only visible under Ultraviolet (UV) light. Simply etch your property with your postcode and house or flat number – this will make it harder for thieves to sell your property.

## Valuables

Register valuables on the UK national property register at [www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com). This will help to reunite you with your property if it is recovered after being stolen. If you have a bicycle, make sure you register it at [www.bikeregister.com](http://www.bikeregister.com)





## Insurance

Check that you have adequate insurance in place to cover your valuables and take photos of any high value items. You should also take photos of you wearing expensive watches, handbags, or jewellery to prove ownership – never post these on social media though as this will alert burglars of valuables in your home.



## Bin-It

Cut up packaging for any expensive items and place it out of sight in your bin. Never leave it next to the bin which could alert burglars to valuable items inside your home. Also shred any documents that contain personal details before you throw them away.



# **DISTRACTION BURGLARY**

Most people who call at your home will be genuine but some may turn up unannounced, with the intention of tricking their way into your home.

**If someone calls at your door:**

## **STOP**

**Before you answer, stop and think if you are expecting anyone. Check that you have locked the back door and taken the key out. Look through a spy hole or window to see who it is. You can choose not to open the door.**

## **CHECK**

**Even if they have a pre-arranged appointment, take time to check their identity card carefully. Close the door while you do this. If you are still unsure, look up the phone number and ring to verify their identity.**

**Never call the number on the identity card, or a number that has been given to you, as these may be fake and you may be speaking to another fraudster.**

**Bogus callers may claim to be from the council, police or utility companies. They may also pose as builders or gardeners and try to trick you into paying for unnecessary work. You should never agree to have work completed by someone who is just passing by.**

**If you think work needs to be done, you can always ask the caller to write to you and get a least two quotes from trusted companies. If you suspect a caller is bogus, you should report it to your local police force or by dialing 101.**

**Remember: IF IN DOUBT, KEEP THEM OUT!**



# DIGITAL SECURITY

## Social Media

Never advertise you are away from home on social media. Avoid tagging yourself at the airport and save posting your holiday photos until you get back. Some home insurance policies become invalidated if you do. Avoid sharing photos of you wearing expensive jewellery, or with valuable items that could attract thieves.



## Electronic Devices

Ensure you have PIN or password protection on all devices, including your internet router at home. Use a strong password for each device and use a different password for your personal accounts including email, social media and online banking. Always use Two Factor Authentication where available.

**Find out more about digital security:**  
**[www.cyberaware.gov.uk](http://www.cyberaware.gov.uk)**

# GOING AWAY CHECKLIST

Here's a quick checklist of things to do before you go away:



- Lock all windows and doors (use the keys on windows, don't just close them)
- Check that side gates, sheds and garages are locked and tools or ladders are not left out
- Store all house, car and window keys out of sight and away from doors and windows
- Make your home look occupied by using a timer to turn on lights, a radio or TV at night
- Ask a trusted friend to look after your home (get them to move any post away from the front door)
- Invite a neighbour to park their car on your drive while you are away



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