

Avoid Being a Victim of Theft

This information is based on that available on www.direct.gov.uk.

Homes with no security measures in place are ten times more likely to be burgled than those with simple security measures. Good window locks and strong deadlocks can make a big difference. Find out about a few effective steps you can take to secure your home.

Top tips: things you can do to prevent burglary

Taking just a few steps can make a big difference in keeping your home safe from burglary.

- Hide all keys, including car keys, out of sight
- Install a visual burglar alarm
- Install good outside lighting
- Leave radios or lights in your house on a timer
- Make sure the fences around your garden are in good condition
- Store valuable items (including passports, driving licences and bank statements) out of view
- Hide cash and wallets away
- Secure bikes at home by locking them to an immovable object inside a locked shed or garage
- Keep ladders and tools stored away; don't leave them outside where they could be used to break into your home

If you live in a building that has a shared entrance, be careful about 'buzzing' people in or holding the door open for a stranger when you walk in or out of your building.

Never leave a spare key in a convenient hiding place, such as under a flowerpot or doormat, or behind a loose brick. Burglars know to look there. They will also check the garage or shed for spare keys to get into your flat or house.

For more information, you can download the 'Keep it Safe' booklet or read the guide to home security from the Home Office Crime Reduction website.

Doors and windows

In most burglaries, the criminals broke into the house or flat through the door, either by forcing the lock or kicking it in. So make sure your doors are strong and secure. Consider fitting a bar for extra strength; a locksmith can advise you on how best to do it.

Glass panels on doors are particularly vulnerable. If you have one on your door you could replace it with laminated glass, which is stronger. You can also

buy a film in a DIY store that you can stick over the glass to make it harder to break.

Home security and DIY shops sell inexpensive, key-operated locks to fit most kinds of windows. Fit window locks with keys to all downstairs windows and those upstairs that are easy to reach.

If you are fitting new doors or windows, make sure the ones you buy are certified to British Standard BS7950 (for windows) or PAS 24-1 (for doors).

Beware of bogus callers

'Distraction burglars', known as bogus callers, will distract your attention in order to get into your home to steal your money or belongings.

If anyone you don't know turns up at your door, you should always ask to see their identification before letting them in. Only let someone into your home when you are absolutely sure they are genuine.

Join Neighbourhood Watch

You can help keep your street safer by getting involved with your local Neighbourhood Watch team.

By working with your neighbours to look out for each other's property, you can make burglars' work much harder.

More information about Neighbourhood Watch can be found at

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/CrimeJusticeAndTheLaw/CrimePrevention/DG_181651.