

Home Security - a little practical advice

Most burglars will look for what they regard as the easy touch. So, they will seek out a property which appears to have little or no security, or which may even have an open window or door making it physically insecure. Burglars will also look for properties which are not visible to onlookers, reducing their chance of being caught in the act.

To assess the security of your home or business premises, imagine you are the burglar, and consider the questions that a typical burglar will ask themselves:

- How am I going to get in?
- Are there any valuable items visible through windows or doors?
- Does the house next door look more of a difficult job to break into?

If the answers to any of these questions are 'yes', the chances are that the burglar will also notice that, and the small possibility of your becoming a victim of burglary will have just increased.

Here are a few helping hints:-

- Lighting
If overlooked or the chance of being seen burglars will prefer to go elsewhere, so get some decent lighting on your house. Dusk till dawn on the front, not only can you see who is at your door, but also when you come home you have a welcoming light. At the rear fit a motion activated light, but ensure you set and site it so animals and plants don't keep turning it on as that only creates more alarm.
- Is there clear unobstructed access to the rear?
Burglars will prefer to gain access out of sight at the rear. Where possible fence and gate access to rear gardens, top this with some trellis or spiky toppings (Max height without planning permission 2m or 1m next to a highway used by vehicles and the spiky topping requires a warning notice). How about some defensive planting, what's this you ask..... something like Berberus, Pyracantha or Hawthorn around perimeter fencing or anything else you wish to protect i.e. domestic fuel tank (some garden centres sell more established plants).
- Windows
Ensure that they have at least two locking points, if not fit visible window locks (most modern UPVC windows although having one handle this in fact engages a multi locking system).
- Doors
In addition to the "Rim Lock" fit and use a five lever mortice lock. Most UPVC doors as with windows use a multi locking system, make sure you know how to use it, when inside pulling the handle up will engage all the

locks but will only lock the centre lock to lock them all in place you must use the key (if in doubt try it before the burglar does).

- French doors
Most modern doors have multi locking systems that lock top, bottom and at the centre, on older doors in addition to the centre lock if each door does not have locks to the top and bottom fit additional ones.
- Keys
Keep them out of sight of the door, but ensure everyone one in the house can find the key to get out in case of fire.
- Illusion
Make the house appear occupied, if going away get a neighbour to open and close curtains, and put rubbish out for you. Let the neighbour park one of their cars on your driveway, it does them a favour too. Table lamps inside on a timer or “dusk till dawn”, a radio on a talking programme, it all helps. Don't let post and newspapers build up at the front door.
- Property marking
If your property is marked with your post code/house number is reduces the value to a thief, visible is best then the thief knows it's marked too. With jewellery and small items photograph them, and record the details, if the item has a serial number make a note of it.
- The shed or out building
Put a decent lock on it and keep it locked. DIY stores/Argos sell shed alarms at reasonable prices as an added deterrent and where possible lock and chain large items to the floor or walls and with smaller items keep them in a secure box. A lot of the above re lighting and property marking also apply to the outbuilding too.

All this said the chances of you being a victim of crime is remote and even more so with a little thought.

Another point if you see something suspicious please report it, it may save you from being the next victim. Call 999 if it is happening at that time or if after the event 0300 333 4444 or you can ring Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111

Regards

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