

# Caravan Security

**Fact one** Caravan thefts are increasing.

**Fact two** Parking at home in your driveway or garden is no guarantee against theft. You still need to fit security devices.

**Fact three** There are many ways to protect caravans.

## Security steps - caravans

### *Hitch locks*

Provide a reasonable degree of protection from an opportunist thief. Get one manufactured from heavy steel to cover the tow socket fixing bolts - make sure it has a good lock.

### *Wheel clamps*

A good deterrent when the caravan is stored in a compound or at home. Some are better than others. Certain designs are vulnerable to hacksaw attack or unbolting of the wheel with the clamp still in place.

### *Wheel stands*

Wheel stands can be a good deterrent but make sure they are locked in place. The chassis manufacturer may recommend the use of axle stands for winter storage.

### *Security posts*

Useful if you keep a caravan at home. Security posts cemented into the drive can allow a caravan to be hitched to them and secured with a hitch lock. Other posts are retractable allowing the caravan to be blocked in the drive once the post is lifted and locked.

## Other steps

- Photograph your caravan, especially any distinctive features.
- Etch the caravan chassis number or postcode on all windows - use an ultra-violet marker pen on items/fittings inside.
- Roof marking with your postcode can assist the police, especially with the increase in police aircraft and helicopters. Commercial kits are available or you can do it yourself.
- The fitting of a reliable alarm alongside other security devices can deter thieves. Make sure it is reliable and properly fitted.
- Keep a record of the caravan chassis number. If the caravan has been CRIS registered (Caravan Registration Identification Scheme) keep the documents safe and away from the caravan.
- Ensure safe storage of a caravan. Don't choose on price alone.
- Some sites have high security compounds, 24-hour guards and sophisticated alarm systems. Remove all personal belongings and contents.

## **Buying a caravan**

- Don't buy in public houses, car parks or motorway service stations. Always try and visit the seller's home address.
- If the seller's house displays a 'For sale' sign, check to see who lives there. Sellers have been known to use the drive of an empty house.
- Check the number plate. Is it the same as the tow car? Is it a temporary or hand-written number plate?
- If a telephone number is given and you are advised to ring between certain times, make sure you are not ringing a 'phone box. Dial 100 and ask the Operator to check.
- Check the caravan chassis number. Has it been altered or removed? If in doubt contact the local police.
- Caravans manufactured since 1992 should have a 17-digit number stamped into the A-Frame and etched into at least three of the windows. The owners should also have a formal registration document.
- You can check with the Hire Purchase Information (HPI) and ask for a CRIS (Caravan Registration and Identification Scheme) check. You will need to give a 17-digit number and the name and address of the owner. HPI will confirm:
  - - the owner details;
  - - if the caravan is listed as stolen;
  - - if there is a finance deal outstanding.

There is a small charge for this service.

If in doubt, walk away and contact your local police.

## **If you are selling a caravan**

Never part with a caravan until the cheque has been cleared. Cheques can be forgeries, or stolen. This includes building society cheques and bank drafts.