

Home Security

Conducting a security survey

Burglars like easy opportunities and most burglaries happen during the day. There are some basic points to remember before any surveyor risk assessment of a home.

- Burglars don't like locked windows, because breaking glass attracts attention.
- They don't like security deadlocks on doors because they cannot open them even from the inside and have to get out through a window.
- Most burglaries are via the rear of premises.

Looking after your home - general security

Gates and fences: A high wall or fence at the back of a house can put off a burglar. Check for weak spots where a thief could get in. A thorny hedge along a boundary can also be a useful deterrent. Make sure the front of the house is still visible to passers-by so that a burglar can't work unseen.

Burglar alarms: Visible alarms make burglars think twice.

Garages and sheds: Never leave a garage or garden shed unlocked, especially if it has a connecting door to the house. Lock tools and ladders away so that a thief cannot use them to break in.

Strangers: Be alert to people loitering in residential streets. If it is no one you recognise, call the police.

Spare keys: Never leave a spare key in a hiding place such as under a doormat, in a flower pot or inside the letterbox - a thief will look there first.

Front door roof: A thief could reach first-floor windows from this roof - so fit window locks.

Small windows: Even small windows like casement windows, skylights or bathroom fanlights need locks. A thief can get in through any gap larger than a human head.

Doors

Mortice deadlock: Fit a five-lever mortice deadlock about a third of the way up the door. Look for one marked to at least B53621.

A deadlock can only be opened with a key, so a thief can't smash a nearby panel to open the door from the inside. If the thief gets into the house through a window, they can't carry your property out through the door.

Hinges: Check that the door hinges are sturdy and secure with strong, long screws. For added security fit hinge bolts. These are inexpensive and help to reinforce the hinge side of the door against the use of force.

Letterboxes: Never hang a spare key inside the letterbox. Consider fitting a letterbox cage which stops thieves from putting their hands through the letterbox and trying the locks from the inside.

Rim latch: Most front doors are fitted with a rim latch which locks automatically when the door is closed but can be opened from the inside without a key.

Automatic deadlock: This locks automatically when the door is closed, but when locked externally with a key, CANNOT be opened from the inside.

Chains: These help you to speak to strangers at the door without letting them in. Buy a chain and use it EVERY time you open the door.

Door viewers: let you identify the caller before opening the door.

Patio doors: Get specialist advice on fitting locks to patio doors. They should have special locks fitted top and bottom unless fitted with system. Also install an anti-lift device.

New doors: Can be purchased to a security standard. Consider asking the installer for them.

Windows

DIY shops stock inexpensive key-operated locks to fit all kinds of window. If you are a tenant you may be able to get the landlord or council to pay to have them fitted.

A lock forces the burglar to break the glass and risks attracting attention.

Consider using laminated glass: a thief will find it more difficult to break.

Fanlight locks have a metal bolt to secure the metal arm ~ used to open and close the Window.

Casement locks make it impossible to open windows without the correct key.

The lock locks the two windows together. A more discreet version is embedded into the wooden frame. Or there are devices to stop the window opening beyond a certain limit.

New windows: Can be supplied to British Standard BS 7950. Consider asking for them.

Lighting

Good lighting can deter a thief. Some exterior lights have an infra-red sensor that switches the light on for a few moments when it detects something in its range. Lights can also be fitted with a light sensor to come on automatically as darkness falls.

Time switches can be used to operate lights and other appliances internally. It might be a good idea if your scheme buys some timers to lend to people when they go away.

Burglar alarms and safes

If your possessions are worth a lot of money or you live in an area with a lot of burglaries, you should consider a burglar alarm or a safe. Ranging from inexpensive DIY kits to sophisticated systems costing hundreds of pounds, there are scores of burglar alarms on the market. Quality fitted alarms will certainly be a deterrent to burglars. Easy to install 'wire free' alarms are now available whereby sensors fitted around the house transmit radio detection signals to a control system. These systems

usually take three to four hours to fit. Wired alarms are cheaper but take longer - around a day - to install.

If you have an alarm installed you should make sure that you designate someone as a key holder for when you are away.

In that way if your alarm does go off, there is someone nearby who can be on hand if the alarm goes off and the police attend the incident.

Get specialist advice and a number of quotes. Consult your insurance company for the companies they recommend. The system installed should meet BS4737 (professionally installed) or BS6707 (DIY).

WITH ALL SECURITY, CONSIDERATION MUST BE GIVEN TO THE RISK OF FIRE AND MEANS OF ESCAPE. ALWAYS FIT A SMOKE DETECTOR CONFORMING TO BRITISH STANDARD 5446.

Gardeners' security

We have looked at security for homes, but what about the security of your garden, garage or shed?

Facts

- The majority of thefts are committed by OPPORTUNISTS.
- Burglars often USE garden tools taken from outbuildings to break into houses.
- The value of property stored in gardens, sheds and garages is much more than you think.
- Your property is at risk.
- If you become a victim of crime your chances of further victimisation are increased.

What can you do?

This fact sheet looks at the security of:

- sheds and buildings;
- individual items of property;
- security outdoors;
- security on allotments.

Sheds and buildings

- Put tools and equipment away. Lock them to the fabric of the building if you can.
- Make sure sheds/outbuildings are locked when not in use.
- Use good quality locks to secure doors.
- Most door hinges on outbuildings are exposed and easily removed by taking out the screws. Use strap hinges secured by coach bolts. Coach bolts are very

long with smooth heads that cannot be undone with a screwdriver or spanner.

- A strong pad bar (also called a hasp and staple) fitted with a close-shackled padlock and secured with coach bolts is the most effective way to secure doors.

Property

- Mark gardening and DIY equipment, garden furniture and ornaments with your postcode, by engraving or printing.
- Photograph valuable plants or ornaments to help police trace them.

Outdoors

- Install security lights to illuminate your garden. Don't underestimate the effect of good lighting as a crime prevention measure.
- Don't forget garden furniture or ornaments. They are expensive and increasingly stolen by criminals.
- Cut back shrubs, hedges and large plants to allow surveillance.
- Prickly planting is a visual deterrent and a physical barrier. Use it to complement and not replace other crime prevention measures. Get advice from your local garden centre.

Allotments

These are harder to protect but much of the advice above can be applied.

- Get to know your neighbours on the allotment and look out for each other.
- Don't leave expensive equipment on site.