

Motorcycle security

The problem

Motorcycles are an easy target for a thief. They can be:

- wheeled away;
- bundled into a van;
- ridden off.

ALL MACHINES large or small are at RISK.

Professional thieves target the machines they want:

- for resale;
- to cannibalise them to rebuild damaged motorcycles;
- to sell them abroad.

Think basic security

Motorcycles may seem harder to secure than cars but BASIC SECURITY can help.

Parking

- During the day, park in a busy, public place.
- At night, park in a well-lit area.
- Try to vary the parking place.
- Whenever possible, use custombuilt motorcycle areas, especially ones with fixed parking stands or loops.
- Keep a look out for car parks displaying a 'Secured Car Park' sign.

Locking up

- Always engage the steering lock.
- Wherever possible, attach the motorcycle to an immovable object or another motorcycle, using high-tension steel cable and a high quality padlock, or a V-lock through the rear wheel or bike frame.
- Don't leave your crash helmet, or other possessions, attached to the motorcycle or in pannier bags.

Additional security

Fit a motorcycle alarm, available from DIY or bike shops, and make it conspicuous. An alarm warning sticker will help put off an opportunist thief.

Security marking

Security marking as many parts of the motorcycle and accessories as possible with the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN), registration number or your postcode, will:

- make them easier to trace - even if cannibalised;
- make the motorcycle - or parts of it - much harder for a thief to sell;

- provide proof of ownership and evidence for police use. There are various methods of security marking, all inexpensive and easily available, either through DIY or carried out professionally by dealers.
- Indelible marking - indelible ink or ultra-violet pens can be used to mark a motorcycle's non-metallic parts and accessories and are available from most stationers.
- Ultra-violet marks are invisible to the naked eye but show up under an ultra-violet lamp. However, remember to renew such marks every few weeks before they begin to fade.
- Engraving or etching - metal stamps or a glass etching kit can also be used.

Buying a motorcycle

Questions to ask when buying a NEW motorcycle

- What built-in security features does it have?
- Does it have a fitted alarm, immobiliser and identification numbers?
- If not, will the dealer fit these at a reasonable price?

Questions to ask when buying a SECOND-HAND motorcycle

- Have you seen the original registration document? Remember that a photocopy is not legally valid.
- Is it the seller's name - or another person's - on the registration document?
- Has the motorcycle's frame or engine number been tampered with?
- Does the frame or engine number match the numbers on the registration document?
- Can the seller provide proof of identity and address?
- Does he or she insist on meeting you away from home, possibly to avoid being identified or traced?
- Are you quite sure the sale is genuine? Do not part with any money if you are at all doubtful.

Other measures

Control of Registration - it is in the interests of all motorcyclists to stop registration documents falling into the wrong hands and being used for stolen motorcycles. If your motorcycle becomes an insurance write-off, ask your insurer to pass the registration document to the DVLA. The DVLA now encourages insurance companies to return all registration documents for written-off machines to prevent them being used in this way.

How employers can help - motorcyclist employers, such as despatch rider firms, should actively promote security awareness among their riders. They could consider, for example, including theft awareness leaflets in wage packets or with the despatch documents.

Dealers - dealers should make it standard procedure to check any machine brought in for a service if they do not know its background. This is especially important if they are asked to supply duplicate keys.