

SmartWater links your belongings to you and your home with a unique, invisible and permanent mark. The Police scan lost and stolen goods for SmartWater helping them to return property to its rightful owner and convict criminals.

By displaying SmartWater window and property stickers at your home you help to deter thieves. These stickers show criminals that you take your security seriously and that if they choose to target your home they run a higher risk of being caught.

PRODUCT FEATURES OF SMARTWATER HOME CODING KIT:

- ✓ **Protect** all your expensive and important household and garden items including: televisions, laptops, jewellery, stereo equipment, power tools, bicycles and motorbikes, MP3 players, mobile phones and lawnmowers
- ✓ Mark approximately **100 – 150 items with a single kit**
- ✓ **Easy to use**, milky liquid drying to a clear, varnish-like finish
- ✓ Once dry, SmartWater **glows green under UV light**
- ✓ Liquid in each kit contains a **unique chemical code**
- ✓ Chemical code is **registered to you and your address**. Your personal data is held by SmartWater in a secure, offline database
- ✓ **Virtually impossible to remove** – tested by motor vehicle security experts Thatcham using chemical cleaners, pressure washers and high temperatures
- ✓ **Will not harm property**
- ✓ Window and **property stickers** advertise that your home is protected
- ✓ Discounted price for Bromsgrove residents **£15** (*£58.88 when purchased direct from www.smartwater.com).



If you would like to purchase SmartWater at the discounted price you can either visit Bromsgrove District Council's Customer Service Centre (located on the ground floor of the Dolphin Leisure Centre) at Bromsgrove Town Centre; purchase over the phone on 01527 881472 and get your kit delivered (additional £2 charge applies) or purchase from any of our Secure Homes Events.

Please note that only cash sales can be accepted at our Secure Homes Events but we also welcome card payments at our Customer Service Centre and when purchased over the phone.



Practical Information
and Advice on Securing
Your Home

Home Security Guide



homeoffice.gov.uk

KEEP IT SAFE. KEEP IT LOCKED **LET'S KEEP CRIME DOWN**

'Easy Pickings' Cottage



Perfect for the professional or opportunist burglar, this delightful period cottage is located down a quiet path and comes complete with a number of unlocked doors and windows. Benefits include no alarm, no security lights and easy access to the rear.

Semi detached accommodation property (where standard parking and essential facilities are available)

Hillcrest Avenue

DON'T ADVERTISE YOUR HOUSE TO BURGLARS.

Home Office

OUTSMART THIEVES

CODE & PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY with SmartWater

- ✓ Deter thieves from targeting your home and belongings
- ✓ Help Police identify lost and stolen property
- ✓ Convict thieves and handlers of stolen goods
- ✓ Home insurance discounts available
- ✓ More than 1 million users throughout the UK



101 is now the number to call when you want to contact your local police – when it's less urgent than 999

My car has been stolen

My property has been vandalised

I want to talk to someone about a crime

I suspect someone is selling stolen goods

I suspect drug dealing in my neighbourhood

My phone has been stolen and I need a crime number

www.police.uk/101

Calls from landlines and mobile networks cost 15 pence per call, no matter what time of day or how long your call.

If you are deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired you can textphone 18001 101

101 is available 24 hours a day.

Crown Copyright June 2011



Dear Resident

This guide has been produced by the Safer Bromsgrove Partnership to provide you with practical information and advice on how to improve the security of your home. Many security improvements are surprisingly straightforward and easy to complete for those who enjoy DIY.

If you require a professional security firm to work on your home, we have provided you with advice on how to locate an appropriately qualified company.

If you would like to discuss any of the issues contained within this guide, please contact Bromsgrove District Council's Community Safety Team on 01527 881288.

Yours faithfully,

Bev Houghton, Chair of Safer Bromsgrove.

How to use this guide

This guide provides you with structured advice and support to improve the security of your home. To get the most from the guide we recommend that you read the information in order.

Once you are familiar with the contents detach the enclosed Home Security Checklist. It will provide you with a step-by-step guide to assessing your home security and making the necessary improvements to secure your home.

Keeping your home safe

Most burglaries are committed by an opportunist. This is someone who takes advantage of an opportunity to commit a crime with little or no pre-planning.

Criminals often choose a home where they can approach and escape unnoticed, that looks unoccupied and has poor security. A burglar is more likely to target a home that they can enter quickly with little risk of being noticed.

Up to half of burglars gain entry without force - through an open door or window. Simply fitting strong locks to your doors and windows, and always keeping them locked, will significantly reduce your risk of being burgled.

Notes for tenants: Whilst most landlords are willing to help their tenants secure their properties, there is no legal obligation for them to undertake the specific works detailed in the guide. Any alterations to the property, undertaken by the tenant will need to be done with the permission of the landlord.

Contents

Page

03	How to use this guide
03	Keeping your home safe
06	External doors
10	Windows
12	Gates and fences
13	Sheds
13	Garages
13	Security lighting
14	General outdoor security
14	Security alarms
17	When your house is empty
17	Property marking
18	Insurance
18	If your home is burgled
18	Selecting a security company
19	Bogus callers and rogue traders
19	Nominated Neighbours Scheme
21	Useful contacts
22	Property record sheet
23	Home security checklist

Look at your home from a criminal's perspective.

Could you get in without your keys?

Could you break in without being noticed?

Credits

This guide has been produced and distributed by:

*Safer Bromsgrove, North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership,
c/o The Community Safety Team,
Bromsgrove District Council.*

This guide was written by:

*Peter Hill, Community Safety Officer,
Safer Redditch, North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership.*

Technical Advisor

*PC Edward Mills, Crime Risk
Manager, West Mercia Police.*

Design Format

*Classic Lines Design, The Coach House, Old Burcot Lane,
Bromsgrove B60 1PH
Tel: 01527 882992 www.classiclinesdesign.com*

*For information regarding the reproduction and distribution of this
guide please contact:*

*The Community Safety Team,
Bromsgrove District Council,
The Council House,*

Burcot Lane,

Bromsgrove,

Worcestershire B60 1AA

Tel: 01527 881288

Email: communitysafety@bromsgrove.gov.uk

Question	Tick	Solution
WINDOWS		
16. Do you have locks on all of your windows? (With the exception of designated fire escapes). See page 10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>If the glass has been smashed, a locked window cannot be opened.</i>
17. If you have French windows, are they secure? See page 8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Mortice and hinge bolts should be fitted to both doors.</i>
ALARMS		
18. Does your home have a burglar alarm? See page 15	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>An alarm is a powerful deterrent to burglary. Always activate your alarm before going to bed.</i>
19. Does your home have smoke alarms?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>For a free home fire safety check contact your local fire service. See page 21</i>
PROPERTY MARKING		
20. Are your personal valuable items security marked? See page 17	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Homes protected by Smartwater are five times less likely to be burgled.</i>
21. Have you got a record of your personal/valuable items? See page 22	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Record details of your valuables on the enclosed property record sheet in this guide.</i>
GOOD HOUSEKEEPING		
22. Do you keep all keys out of sight of doors and windows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Remember thieves can hook keys through your letterbox.</i>
23. Do you keep all valuables out of sight?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Do not position valuable items so they can be seen from outside. Blinds or net curtains can be used to limit views.</i>
24. Have you removed any valuable property stored in sheds or garages? See page 13	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Sheds and garages are not designed for secure storage.</i>
25. Do you have a smoke alarm, on each level of your home that you check every week?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Change the battery in your smoke alarm every year. Replace your smoke alarm every ten years.</i>

Any crime reduction measures implemented should take full account of the following legislation:

- The Occupiers Liability Act 1984
- Building Regulations
- Fire Regulations
- Health and Safety
- The Highways Act 1980
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Planning Law and Local Planning Governance
- Any other relevant legislation

It is particularly important that work carried out to improve security will not make it difficult for the occupants to evacuate in the event of a fire.

Any alterations to the property, undertaken by a tenant will need to be done with the permission of the landlord.

Doors

Two out of every three burglars will enter a home through a door. Always ensure that external doors are locked.



External Doors

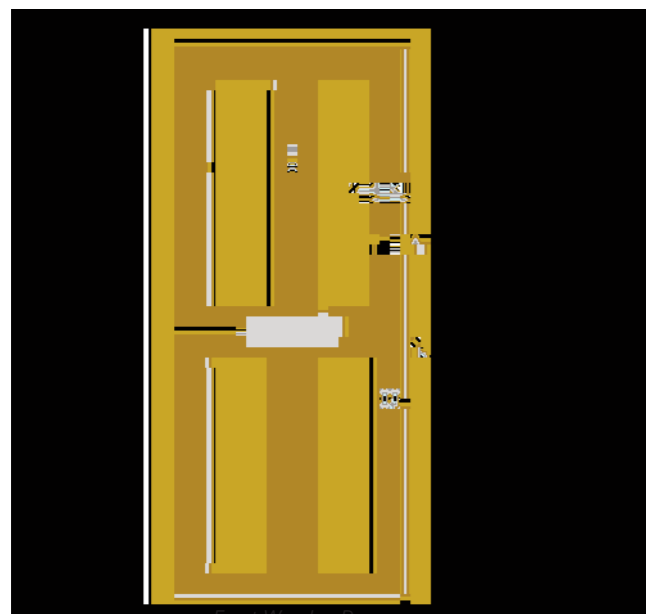
Always ensure that external doors leading into unoccupied rooms are locked. If you are thinking of replacing a door, we strongly recommend choosing one that is kite-marked to British Standard PAS-24-1 'Doors for Enhanced Security'. Regardless of any other claims, which are commonly made by suppliers, only this type of door will have been tested for security. Insist that your supplier provides a door which meets this standard.

Door & Frame

Both the door and frame should be solid, strong and free from cracks and warping. Wooden doors should be at least 44mm, (1 3/4 inches), thick.

Doors and frames are weaker where locks, hinges and handles are fitted. Reinforcing these areas with steel strips or plates, often referred to as hinge or frame guards, will improve the strength of your door set.

Many lower door panels are thin and not as strong as the main sections of the door. These are vulnerable to being kicked through. Consider reinforcing this type of panel with a stronger, surface-mounted panel, or consider other ways to make it stronger, such as fitting internal door bars. Try and avoid buying doors which have thin panel sections that could be easily kicked in.



Front Wooden Door

Hinges

Hinges should be sturdy, free from rust and secured with long screws. The hinge side of a door can be made more secure by fitting hinge bolts. When the door is closed these lock the door into the frame. Hinge bolts are especially important for outward-opening doors.

Door Chain/Door Defender

A door chain or door defender provides security when opening the door to a caller. You should always use the chain or bar when answering the door to someone you do not know.



Door Defender

Door Viewer

A door viewer helps you identify callers without unlocking the door. It is always important to know who is at the door BEFORE you open it. Fit an outside light next to the door so you can see outside when it is dark.

Where a door viewer cannot be fitted an alternative solution would be to install a small CCTV camera which relays images of a caller to your TV or handset screen.

Glass panels in or next to your door make it particularly vulnerable, especially if a panel, once broken, would allow access to your locks. Get a professional installer to replace normal glass with laminated glass, which is much stronger and safer.

Letterbox

Letterboxes should be at least 400mm, (16 inches) away from any locks. A letterbox deflector allows mail to be delivered but prevents a thief from being able to reach in with their hand.

Door keys, car keys, wallets and money should not be within sight of letterboxes, glazing or cat flaps.

Home Security Checklist

The information and advice given in this booklet is free of charge. There can be no guarantee that the measures listed will prevent crime. Please read the content of this Home Security Guide before completing this assessment.

Question	Tick	Solution
EXTERNAL SECURITY		
1. Is the side and rear of your home protected against intruders? See page 12	<input type="checkbox"/>	Good security fences and lockable gates can deter intruders.
2. Are your gardens well maintained? See page 14	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intruders are more likely to target homes that look uncared for.
3. Are your garages and sheds secure? See page 13	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fit strong locks to sheds and garage doors.
4. Is there good visibility to the front of your home? See page 12	<input type="checkbox"/>	Keeping the height of shrubs and hedges low, can prevent burglars from working on a property unseen.
5. Are all external doors and vulnerable areas lit? See page 13	<input type="checkbox"/>	Good external dusk to dawn lighting can deter burglars.
FRONT/REAR DOORS		
6. Is your front door solid and in good condition? See page 6	<input type="checkbox"/>	The door should be solid, strong and free from cracks and warping.
7. Is your door frame in good condition?	<input type="checkbox"/>	The frame should be as strong as the door
8. Does your door have a door viewer, or some other method of seeing who is outside without unlocking the door? See page 6	<input type="checkbox"/>	Door viewers allow you to see who's at the door, before opening it.
9. Does your front door have a door chain or similar device? See page 6	<input type="checkbox"/>	These allow you to greet visitors safely. 'If in Doubt, Keep Them Out!'
10. Does your front door have a 5 lever mortice lock and night-latch or multi-point locking system? See page 7	<input type="checkbox"/>	A mortice lock should be at least a 5 lever lock certified to BS3621.
11. Is your letter box 16 inches (40cm) away from any door locks? See page 6	<input type="checkbox"/>	A letterbox deflector prevents thieves reaching in and opening locks from the inside.
12. Are your back door frames in good condition?	<input type="checkbox"/>	The frame should be as strong as the door.
13. Do your back doors have 5 level mortice locks and two mortice bolts, or a multi-point locking system? See page 6	<input type="checkbox"/>	A mortice lock should be at least a 5 lever lock certified to BS3621.
14. Are your patio doors fitted with an additional patio door lock? See page 8	<input type="checkbox"/>	Additional patio locks can stop patio doors from being lifted off the rails.
15. Do you keep your doors locked even when your home is occupied?	<input type="checkbox"/>	A distraction burglar will often enter an occupied home through an unlocked door.

Property Record Sheet

This sheet provides a record of marked items and will aid the police in identifying and recovering stolen items. Once completed this page should be detached from the guide and stored in a safe location with photos of the items listed. If required, please photocopy this page.

Item	Description	Serial number	Date and place purchased	Value	Type & location of ID mark
Digital Camera	Silver Handicam 434. 14.0 megapixel	9TFCD 777809	3rd August 2009 The Camera Centre, 24 High Street, Redditch	£85.99	Smartwater base

Wooden Door Locks

Mortice Deadlock

A five-lever mortice deadlock, certified as indicated by the kite mark to British Standard BS3621 (BS8621 for flats), is a strong lock fitted to the lower half of the door. It provides a good level of protection against most forms of attack.



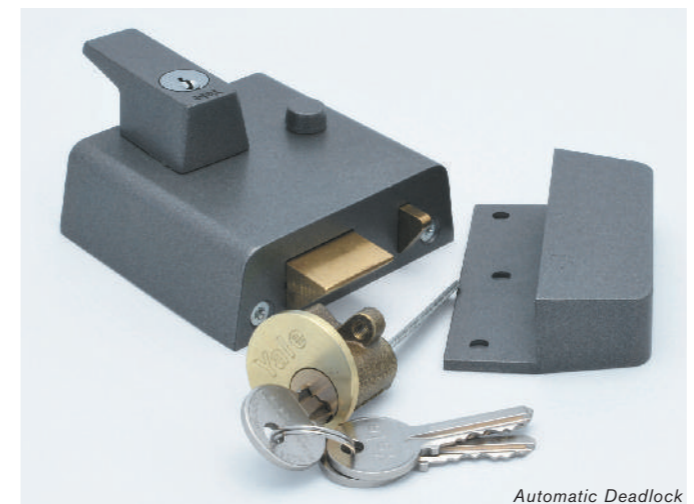
Mortice Deadlock

Rim Lock (night-latch)

If you have a wooden front door, with only one locking point, a night-latch can be added. A night-latch automatically locks when the door is closed. It is opened from the inside using a lever, but from outside requires a key. When buying a night-latch look for one kite-marked to British Standard BS3621.

Automatic Deadlock

This type of lock can be secured requiring a key to open it from both the inside and outside, and is therefore more secure than a night-latch.



Automatic Deadlock

UPVC Door Locks

Most UPVC doors have a multi-point locking system with at least three bolts operated by the turn of a handle, thumb-turn or key. Claw/hook bolts, which lock the door into the frame, provide greater security than shoot bolts.

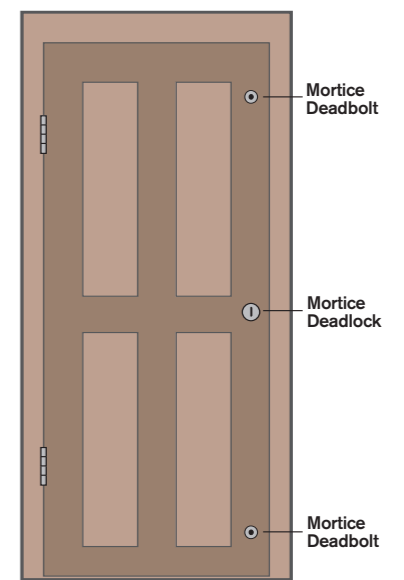
Many burglaries take place when residents forget to lock their doors. Standard UPVC door locks can be replaced with ones with a night-latch facility. This means they lock automatically when the door is closed.

The cylinder locks on UPVC doors may be vulnerable to a method of entry known as key bumping. It is a method by which a burglar will open the lock using an adapted key. If you replace the cylinder with a one kite-marked to BS3621:2007, (or later), it will be resistant to this form of entry.

If you are adding any security feature, a door chain, door viewer etc, to a UPVC door be aware that you could damage the locking mechanism, or affect your warranty. Seek advice from the manufacturer before adding additional security features to this type of door.

Back Doors

A wooden back door can be secured with the addition of mortice bolts, also known as rack bolts, to the top and bottom of the door.



Back Wooden Door

Mortice Deadbolts need to be locked from the inside and therefore require you to use the front door to exit the house.



Mortice Deadbolt, shown with Key and Thumbturn

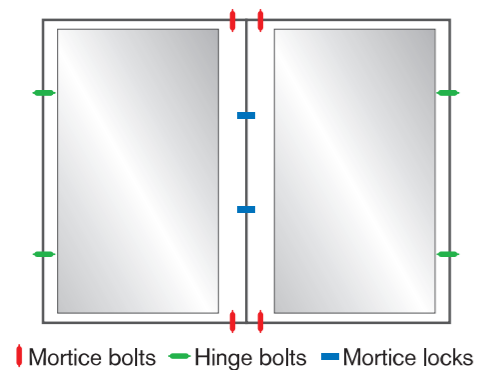
Patio Doors

Sliding patio doors should have more than one locking point. Many modern doors are fitted with a multi-point locking system. If your doors do not have this type of system, additional patio door locks should be fitted to the top and bottom of the sliding door. Anti-lift devices can also be fitted to sliding patio doors to prevent burglars lifting them off their guiding rail.

French Windows

Normally French windows are double doors that open outwards. They should be fitted with at least two locking points securing both doors together and each door should have two mortice bolts securing them to the frame top and bottom, see diagram below.

The hinges on French windows are typically located on the outside of the door. A burglar may break the hinges and pull a door away from the frame. Fitting hinge bolts, one per hinge, would secure the door in its frame even if the hinges were attacked.



■ Mortice bolts ■ Hinge bolts ■ Mortice locks

Keys

Do not leave keys in their locks or your car keys on display. If a criminal can see your keys from outside, they may be prepared to take greater risks to get to them.

Do not hide a spare key outside your home. If necessary leave it with a trusted neighbour.

Do keep your door keys out of sight but near the door. In the event of an emergency you may need to exit quickly.

Do plan an easy escape route and make sure everyone in the house knows the plan.

Flats

1. The Private Door

The front doors to homes off communal areas should be no less secure than those in a traditional house. For door security you should follow the guidance above. However, locking mechanisms should be fitted in accordance with British Standard BS5588 'Part 1, 1990 Fire Precautions in the Design and Construction and Use of Buildings'. You should be able to open the lock from the inside by a single manual operation without a key. The best way of achieving this is to ensure the door is fitted with a multi-point locking system with an internal thumb-turn kite-marked to British Standard 8621: 2007 or later.

2. Communal Doors

The security of communal entrance doors can be enhanced with a phone entry system, or preferably a video entry system, so that occupants can see callers before allowing them in.

Treat these doors as a first line of defence. Never let anyone in you do not know, unless you are absolutely sure they are genuine. Also, make sure the door closes behind you and locks shut. Never allow anyone to follow you in, unless you are sure they have a right to be there.

Never hide a spare key outside your home. Burglars will often check for keys hidden inside a letterbox, under a mat or garden ornament or inside guttering etc.

Legislation Disclaimer

Any crime reduction measures implemented should take full account of the following legislation:

The Occupiers Liability Act 1984
Building Regulations
Fire Regulations
Health and Safety
The Highways Act 1980
Crime and Disorder Act 1998
Planning Law and Local Planning Governance
Any other relevant legislation

It is particularly important that work carried out to improve security will not make it difficult for the occupants to evacuate in the event of a fire.

While the advice contained within this booklet may reduce the risk of crime, there can be no guarantee that the measures implemented will prevent crime. The advice is given without the intention of creating a contract. Bromsgrove District Council, West Mercia Police and its employees take no legal responsibility for any advice given.

Notes for tenants: Whilst most landlords are willing to help their tenants secure their properties, there is no legal obligation for them to undertake the specific works detailed in the guide. Any alterations to the property, undertaken by the tenant will need to be done with the permission of the landlord.

Useful Contacts

Crimestoppers 0800 555111 www.crimestoppers-uk.org

Bromsgrove District Council 01527 881288 www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

Get Safe Online (safety and security online) www.getsafeonline.org

Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service 0800 032 1155

Master Locksmiths Association 01327 262 255 www.locksmiths.co.uk

National Security Inspectorate 01628 637512 www.nsi.org.uk

Neighbourhood Watch 01162 710052 www.neighbourhoodwatch.net

Secured by Design (physical home security advice) 0207 084 8962 www.securedbydesign.com

Security Systems and Alarms Inspection Board 01912963242 www.ssaib.org

Trading Standards via Consumer Direct 08454 040506

Victim Support Hereford and Worcestershire 0845 1264101 (0845 30 30 900 out of hours helpline)

West Mercia Police 101 www.westmercia.police.uk



Agencies and Organisations



Windows

One in three burglars will enter a property through a window.



Windows

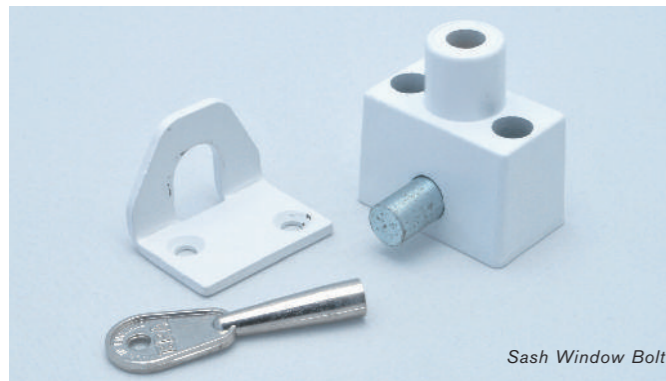
When replacing windows choose those certified to British Standard BS7950: *'Windows for Enhanced Security'*. Unless a window is to be used as a fire exit, make sure it is fitted with a key-operated window lock.

When replacing a window consider one with a small opening, rather than one an intruder could climb through. Consider a design similar to that below to make it harder for an intruder to enter.



Only a small part of this window can be opened for ventilation, making it difficult for an intruder to enter.

More secure window locks require a specific key to open them. A burglar will be reluctant to risk the noise of breaking glass, especially if the window is locked shut **and the key removed**.



Sash Window Bolt

Louvre windows - windows made from several horizontal slats - are particularly vulnerable. The slats can be removed without great force. If you are unable to replace louvre windows with fixed glass, seek advice on bonding the slats into their fixtures or installing a specialised louvre window lock.

Seek professional advice before fitting locks to UPVC or metal windows as this may affect your warranty. It is best to get a member of the Master Locksmiths Association to fit locks for these types of windows, see page 21 for contact details.

Laminated glass contains a clear plastic layer. It can be used to improve window security as it is far more difficult to break than other types of glass. Generally the thicker the laminated glass used, the stronger it will be. Laminated glass looks almost identical to ordinary glass and is easy to purchase. Decorative metal security grills can help to protect windows, however these should not be used on windows required as fire exits. Security film can be used as an alternative, but to be fully effective it should be fitted across the entire pane of glass anchored to the frame or fitted beneath the glazing beads.

Ground floor windows and those accessible by climbing onto a flat roof are most vulnerable, especially if they are not overlooked. Where possible consider planting thorny shrubs against the wall beneath ground floor windows. If an intruder cannot reach a window they will be unable to climb in.

Remember to secure garage windows, especially if there is an internal door connecting the garage to the main house.

Do not leave windows open in an unoccupied room.

Do fit window locks and use them. Keep your window keys out of sight.



Automatic Window Lock

Any window that opens wider than the human head can be an entry point.

If you are moving to a new home, look for a locksmith who is a member of the Master Locksmiths Association and change the door locks immediately.



Bogus Callers

Some burglars will try and persuade a resident to let them in. They may claim they are from the gas, electric or water companies visiting your home in an emergency. Do not let them in!

Watch out for anyone who says they are in a hurry and do not let them pressure you.

They might say they are from the council or simply ask to use a toilet. This type of burglar may be accompanied by children and have some form of ID.

When someone calls at your house get into the habit of keeping safe:

1. Think – is your back door locked?
2. Stop – are you expecting anyone?
3. Use your door viewer or window to see who has called.
4. If you want to open the door use the door chain, bar or door defender.
5. **If in doubt keep them out!** Ask them to make an appointment when you know you'll have other people in the house.

If your home has a communal entrance, do not provide entry or hold a door open for a stranger.

ID badges are easy to fake. If you want to confirm a caller's identity phone their office or call centre using a number from a bill or phone book. Do not use the number the caller has given you!

Cold-Callers/Rogue Traders

Often bogus callers will call at a house as builders or gardeners to persuade the homeowner to pay for unnecessary work. Never agree for work to be carried out by a cold-caller. Never pay a cold-caller for work you did not request.

If you think, or are told, that work needs to be done on your house get quotes from two or three trusted companies.

If you let someone into your home and you become uncomfortable ask them to leave. If they do not leave make an excuse, go to a neighbour and ask them to return with you.

If you think you have been visited by a bogus caller phone the police immediately on 999.

Nominated Neighbour Scheme

If a vulnerable person is visited by an unknown caller they can present a card at their window redirecting the person to their nominated neighbour's house.

The nominated neighbour will speak to the caller, establish their identity and accompany them back. Information about the scheme is available from your Local Policing Team, see 'Useful Contacts'.



the liquid is purchased the code is registered to the customer's address.

Police actively search for Smartwater, which shows up under certain types of UV light. It provides a permanent and irrefutable link between property and its owner. Contact your local police for more information about acquiring Smartwater kits, see 'Useful Contacts'.

Independent research shows that homes protected by Smartwater are five times less likely to be burgled.

Insurance

In the event of a burglary adequate insurance will ease the financial worry of replacing property. Insurance companies may offer reduced rates to homeowners with good security, but the company will expect these measures to be used.

Make sure your windows and doors are locked correctly and your alarm system is switched on. If you fail to do this your insurance might not cover you in the event of a break-in. Make sure that your insurance policy covers items stored in your shed and garage.

If Your Home is Burgled

Following the advice in this pack can help reduce the risk of you becoming a burglary victim. However, it is worth considering how you would respond if your house was burgled.

Do you make a noise to deter the burglar from remaining in the property? The answer will be a personal choice and may depend on whether you are alone.

Can you make a phone-call to the police without leaving the room? A phone by the bed will mean you can call for help quickly. Dial 999.

If you return to find your home burgled:

1. Do not enter - the burglar could still be inside.
2. Go to a neighbour's house and call the police.

Let them know if you think the burglar is still inside your house.

3. Do not touch anything. You could damage valuable evidence.

Selecting a Security Company

Do not be tempted to make a rushed decision when buying additional security. If you live in a rented property consult your landlord before carrying out any work.

Your insurance company may have a list of businesses they consider reputable to carry out security work. In any event you should consider the following:

- Is the company registered with a regulatory body: The National Security Inspectorate, Security Systems and Alarms Inspection Board, The Master Locksmiths Association?
- Is this an established company with a long trading history, able to provide references from satisfied customers?
- Does the company provide a warranty?
- Look for the various British Standard Kite-marks, as listed in this guide, on the items you are shown.

Get to Know Your Neighbourhood

Local people looking after their own neighbourhood can help prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and improve the quality of life for residents.

Residents may form Neighbourhood Watch groups in order to improve the security of an area, and for peace of mind. Neighbourhood Watches working with local authorities are very successful at combating rogue traders, reducing burglary and car theft.

If you would like more information, please contact your Neighbourhood Watch Liaison Officer or Local Policing Officer, see 'Useful Contacts'.

Outside

Burglars will often target homes that appear poorly maintained, with untidy gardens, thinking they would have poor security.



Gates and Fences

A fence around the perimeter of your house will slow down a burglar both entering and leaving your home. This increases their chances of being seen and caught.

To the Front

Planting, walls and fencing towards the front of your house should be low enough to ensure that an intruder would be seen by passers by. High barriers such as tall fences and hedges allow a burglar to work unnoticed, making your home a more attractive target.

Low fences, hedges or walls at the front of your home may not seem like much of a barrier, but they provide a clear definition between your property and public space. They provide a strong psychological deterrent, as crossing this boundary will make an intruder feel more conspicuous.

To the Rear

A strong, tall fence, at least 1.8 metres in height, with secure gates can prevent access to the rear of your home. Check your fences for loose or broken panels. Some people prefer thorny hedges as a means to secure their boundary. Make sure that such hedges are well-maintained and free from gaps.

Gates

Many gates are only locked by a sliding bolt. While this may make it more difficult for intruders to enter your garden, it provides a burglar with an easy escape route. A gate lock requiring a specific key will provide better security. Your gate should be at least 1.8 metres (6 feet) high.

Gates can be fitted to the side of a house to stop an intruder walking around the back. Side gates should be fitted flush to the front of the building so that anyone trying to climb them would be more likely to be noticed. A dusk-to-dawn security light above the gate will help make an intruder visible and conspicuous during the hours of darkness.

Stopping Climbers

Fixed fences or walls taller than 2 metres (6 feet, 6 inches) will almost certainly require planning

permission. If the fence or wall is next to a road it cannot be higher than 1 metre (3 feet, 3 inches) without planning permission. If in doubt check with your local Planning Department.

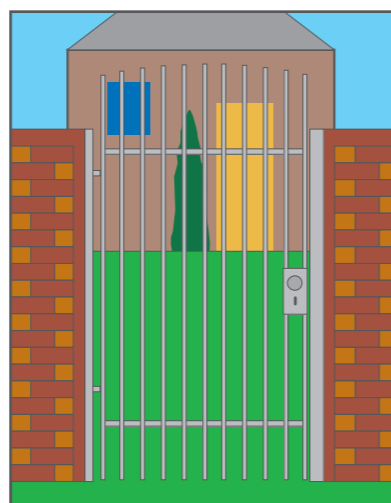
Make sure there are no potential climbing aids close to fences or gates such as low walls with large garden ornaments or wheelie bins. Where possible secure your wheelie bin in an inaccessible location such as a bin store garage or shed. If this isn't possible secure your wheelie bin to a wall bracket using a chain and padlock. Remember to unlock it prior to a bin collection.

Where you cannot remove a climbing aid, you should consider additional anti-climb measures such as adding lightweight trellis or planting thorny shrubs.

Lightweight trellis will not support a person's bodyweight making it more difficult to climb.

Anti-climb paint is not recommended as it is relatively easy to climb over, requires routine repainting and looks unsightly.

Planting a thorny hedge between your fence and the public space can help to protect your fence and home. However, make sure you are not planting on land you do not own without permission.



Railing style gates reduce the chance of a burglar working on a property unnoticed.

Do not use potentially harmful anti-climb measures on walls and fences, such as nails, broken glass or barbed wire. If they cause an injury you may be held legally responsible.

When Your Home is Empty

As most burglaries happen when a home is empty avoid discussing holiday plans in public.

A burglar may look for several signs that a home is empty:

- **Curtains.** If you have a trusted neighbour you could ask them to look after your home while you are away; for example drawing curtains and collecting mail
- **Lights and sound.** Timer switches fitted to plugs can activate lights, radios etc at specific times. Ensure sound equipment is set to a volume that will not disturb neighbours
- **Milk, mail and newspapers.** Cancel orders while you are away. The Royal Mail's 'Keepsafe' service can hold your mail for up to two months
- **Uncut grass.** If you plan to be away from your home for a while mow the lawn before you leave.

Consider storing valuable items from your shed in the house. You may want to leave important documents, jewellery and other high value items with a family member.

When travelling, do not have your home address on luggage labels. This will advertise the fact that your home may be empty.

Property Marking

Every year the police recover hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of stolen property. However if they cannot identify the rightful owners it may be impossible to prove this property was stolen, or return it to its rightful owner.

Thieves find it difficult to sell identifiable property. Mark your valuable items and display 'Property Marked' window and door stickers.

Your postcode followed by the number of your home, or the first two letters of your house name, is a

simple way of uniquely identifying property. If you want the mark to be out of sight do not choose a place so well hidden that the police would not be able to find it. Use the Property Record Sheet, see page 22, to record the details of your marked belongings.

Consider the best method of marking your property. Marking items like jewellery or antiques may reduce their value. Get expert advice before you mark valuable items. In addition it is a good idea to photograph valuable items next to a ruler showing any distinguishing marks. This creates a simple and effective record of your valuables.

Visible Marking

This form of marking leaves a permanent, visible mark. Methods include using permanent marker pens and engraving. A visible mark is the best method of deterring a theft because anyone who comes into contact with the item can immediately see the identity of the rightful owner.

Ultra-violet Marking

This form of marking, using ultra-violet (UV) ink, leaves no visible mark and has the advantage of not 'defacing' the item. The mark will only show up under a UV lamp. UV marks can fade over time, especially in sunlight, so they need to be occasionally renewed.

Electronic Marking

Certain electrical items such as TVs allow you to record your details into a password-protected menu screen.

Smartwater

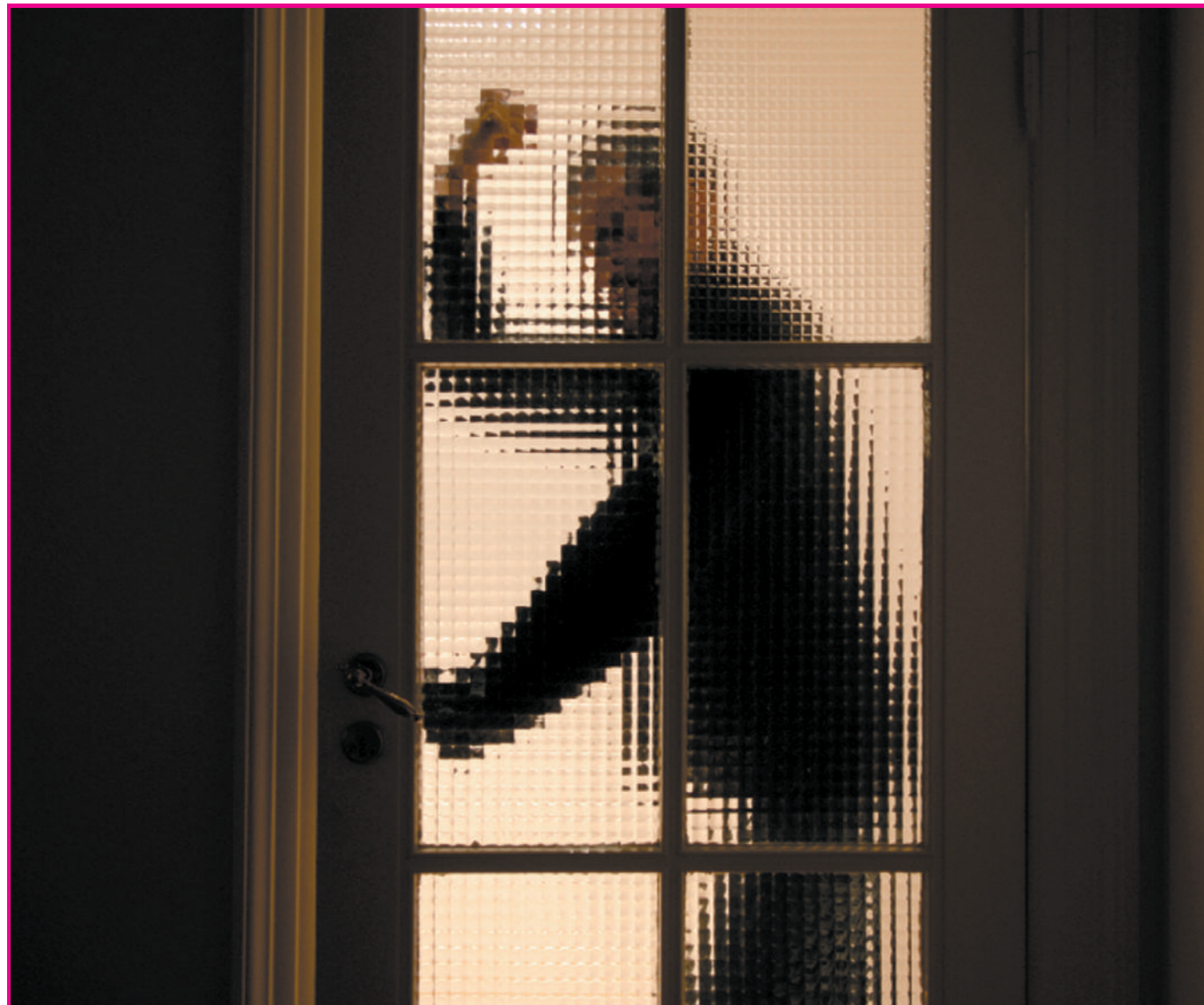
Most areas of the UK support the use of a specialist property-marking tool called Smartwater. This is a clear liquid which has a unique forensic code. When



Smartwater with UV Torch and Window Sticker

Inside

An intruder will not want to be interrupted during a burglary. Almost half of burglaries occur when a property is empty.



Sheds

Sheds are not designed for secure storage. They are generally constructed from low-quality timber and are popular targets for burglars.

Many burglars will use tools from a shed to break into the house. Ideally sheds should not be used to store expensive items such as power tools, mowers, or bicycles. However, if you have no alternative you should consider the following security measures:

- Ensure that your shed has strong locks. If your shed timber is less than 44mm thick, fit a rim lock rather than a mortice lock. If a lock is fixed into the shed timber with screws it can be levered away. In place of screws use mushroom-headed bolts, (coach bolts), reinforced inside the shed with a steel plate or wide metal washer
- Padlocks are generally not recommended, although if you do use one, ensure it is good quality and has a closed shackle made from hardened steel. A closed shackle padlock is less likely to be cut with bolt cutters.



Closed shackle padlock



Open shackle padlock

- Shed windows are generally flimsy and very vulnerable. When buying a shed, consider choosing one without windows. If your shed does have windows, consider screwing them down so that they are closed permanently, and fix grilles or bars over them to make them more secure
- Fit a ground anchor set into a concrete base. Chain items such as mowers and bicycles together
- Permanently mark property stored in your shed with your house number and post code. Display a notice warning criminals that your property has been security marked. For advice about purchasing a property marking kit and stickers contact your local police team

- As an extra deterrent, consider fitting a battery operated alarm or upgrading the house alarm to include the shed. Advertise any security measures by displaying warning signs.

Garages

If possible keep your car locked in a garage rather than on the drive. Many garages have a single metal door which opens in an 'up and over' movement bringing the door horizontal with the roof. The fitted locks on these doors provide little security. It is therefore a good idea to fit additional garage door bolts, or a garage door defender.

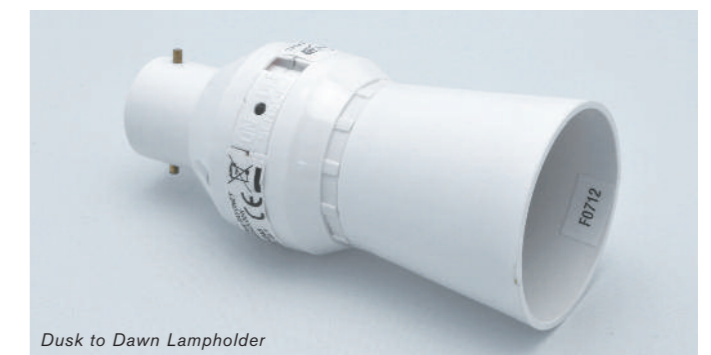
If there is a connecting door from the garage into the house this should be the same quality, and have the same level of security, as a rear door. It should also be fire rated to at least thirty minutes. This means it will withstand fire for thirty minutes.

If your home is fitted with an intruder alarm system consider extending it to cover the garage.

Security Lighting

Burglars operating during the hours of darkness are less likely to be seen. Lighting areas where a burglar could enter your garden or access a door, window or climbing aid, such as a drainpipe, removes this advantage.

Dusk-to-dawn lights are fitted with a light sensor and so turn on during darkness. Fit high-efficiency, low-energy bulbs to provide an appropriate level of light at the smallest cost. Motion sensor lights do not provide the same level of deterrent. However dual sensor lights can be purchased which provide medium dusk-to-dawn lighting and will switch to full power when movement is detected.



Dusk to Dawn Lampholder

Security lighting should be fitted where possible 2.5 metres (8 feet) above ground level. This will reduce the risk of the lights being tampered with. Lights should be positioned to avoid annoying the neighbours and pedestrians or distracting traffic.

The Garden

A burglar is more likely to target a home which looks uncared for. Keeping your doors and windows clean, repainting the frames and keeping your gardens well-maintained will reduce the likelihood of a burglary.

Adding certain types of gravel, for example York Gold, to paths and driveways will deter burglars as it can be noisy to walk on.

Remember most burglaries happen when someone spots an opportunity to enter a property. Remove or secure any of the following in your garden:

- **Ladders and climbing aids.** If you are unable to store a ladder in a garage or shed, lock it horizontally to a secure wall bracket. A wheelie bin placed below a low roof or fence provides an ideal climbing aid. If you are planning to build a gazebo onto your house ensure it does not help a burglar access the vulnerable upstairs windows
- **Gardening tools.** The unequipped burglar can make good use of any tools you provide for them. Items such as spades, forks and screwdrivers can aid a burglar
- **Bricks and masonry.** A burglar may use loose bricks or masonry to break a lock or window
- **Confidential waste.** If you have a recycling bin, do not place unshredded personal documents inside. These may be used to aid identity theft

A garden fork, or spade, left outside can be used to force open a door or window.



An anchor point, chain and padlock, fitted to an outside wall, can be used to secure an item which cannot be stored in a shed or garage.

Security Alarms

A visible alarm is a powerful burglary deterrent. Expensive, sophisticated systems need to be installed by professionals. Cheaper DIY versions are less reliable and can cause a nuisance through false alarms.

Before purchasing an alarm system talk with your insurance company. They may offer you a discount on your annual premium if it meets their required standard.

Security alarms provide a useful warning and limit the risk of theft and damage to your home. Surveys have consistently shown that houses are much less likely to be burgled if an alarm is fitted.

An experienced burglar can tell if an alarm box is a dummy. The cost of professionally installing a good quality alarm system has fallen significantly over recent years.

The effectiveness of an alarm system is not necessarily its ability to attract the attention of neighbours or passers-by, but the way it affects the burglar. Burglars do not like attracting attention to themselves and they will feel anxious and exposed when an alarm sounds.

Alarm systems using motion sensors may be activated by pets. However there are pet friendly infra-red detectors available. This is something you should discuss with your installer.

Monitored Systems

Monitored systems send a signal to a central monitoring station which can quickly notify the police. Some systems allow the monitoring station to see if a burglar is in your home. These systems are more affordable now, although an annual maintenance and monitoring fee is required. This type of system should be kite-marked to British Standard BS4737 (EN50131-1).

Audible-only Systems

An audible-only system will sound a bell or siren to attract attention and help to deter a potential burglar. This system should be kite-marked to British Standard BS4737 (EN50131-1) or BS6799 for a wire-free system. This type of system does not guarantee a police response.

The police usually attend the activation of an audible-only alarm if there are suspicious circumstances reported to them, e.g. the sound of breaking glass.

DIY Systems

DIY alarm systems are available through a number of hardware stores. You should only attempt an installation if you are competent at DIY. This type of system should be kite-marked to British Standard BS6707.

Professionally Installed Systems

You should obtain quotes from at least three security companies who are subject to independent inspection by a recognised body such as:

- NSI (National Security Inspectorate) formerly known as NACOSS, Sentinel House, 5 Reform Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 8BY. Tel: 01628 637512. Web: www.nsi.org.uk
 - SSAIB (Security Systems and Alarms Inspection Board) 131 Bedford Street, North Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE29 6LA. Tel: 0191 2963242. Web: www.ssaib.org
- Before you disclose any personal details, ensure that you have checked the credentials of your chosen company and requested proof of identity from their inspectorate, see above.

Questions for your Alarm Installer

- Ask which independent inspectorate the company is subject to, e.g. NSI, SSAIB and check the alarm system meets the required British Standard (see above)
- Do you want to own or rent the system? Ask if there are any maintenance/monitoring contracts, or additional hidden extras such as call out charges
- Ask how long the guarantee lasts for, and what happens if there is a problem after that? Is there a 24-hour callout service and emergency attendance within four hours
- Ask the installers for training on how you operate the system
- Do not accept verbal contracts. Ensure that any agreements between you and the company are written, and that you or your representative read the contents carefully before signing.



An alarm box is a powerful deterrent to burglary however professional burglars can tell the difference between a genuine and a dummy alarm system.

Never buy a security system from a cold caller regardless of the claims they make.