

Crime Prevention - Your Home

Many burglaries are opportunist crimes. A burglar only needs to spot an open window or an unlocked door or gate to make their move.

Look at your home or business through the burglar's eyes. If you think your security looks poor, chances are so will a thief.

The good news is that it doesn't take much to improve security and put off thieves. Money spent on realistic security is a good investment; it will last a long time, can add value to your property, it can benefit your insurance cover and most of all give peace of mind that being a crime victim is not inevitable.

Secured by Design originally looked at new build and large scale refurbishment, achieving significant reductions in crime. This section brings the essence of SBD security to home owners and businesses. Where relevant we have linked sections to further information or to lists of companies that can supply a particular type of product meeting the standards.

Effective Security

Faced with a wide range of products it is often difficult to know how effective they are. It is true to say that given time, sophisticated power tools or inside information security may eventually be beaten. Good prevention denies the use of normally available tools, increases the risk for the thief perhaps by increasing the noise, effort and time to steal, or reduces the value to the thief.

To assist you make choices Secured by Design has identified a range of test standards that indicate products which are more likely to resist common forms of attack and therefore give better protection.

Our home page takes you to information on the standards and details of many of the companies that make products meeting these standards and who support this project.

Please note that Secured by Design does not guarantee the products, but offers a route to understanding and benefiting from the technical standards that indicate reasonable resilience to attack.

Business Premises

Much of the advice and standards described here can also apply to business premises. However, to address the particular needs of businesses the Home Office, in collaboration with Secured by Design, the Association of Convenience Stores and the ABI, have produced a free detailed guide *Your business Keep crime out of it*. To download a copy click here www.crimereduction.gov.uk/yourbusiness. You can follow up this advice and research types of security products by returning to our home page.



Doors

If your front and back doors are not secure, neither is your home. Two thirds of burglars gain entry through a door.

Remember, quality locks and bolts are only as strong as the door and the frame to which they are fitted. Wooden doors should be solid and at least 44mm (1 ¾") thick. Check that the frame is well fixed, and if weak or rotten replace it.

Glass panels on or around doors are especially vulnerable, so it's worth replacing them with laminated glass.

If you replace a door it is better to buy a new "door set" certified to British Standard PAS 24-1 'Doors of Enhanced Security'. Bought as a complete kit, this shows that the door, frame, locks and fittings have been attack tested.

- BS: PAS24 door sets are available in different materials, so specify this standard if you are having replacement doors.
- Remember to fit all security devices with strong screws or bolts.
- If fitting locks to a standard door fit a 5-lever mortise lock tested to BS: 3621 plus a BS: 3621 night latch. See lock section below.
- Before fitting locks to PVC-U or metal doors, check with the installer to make sure that this will not affect your warranty.

Patio doors

Patio doors are especially vulnerable to break-in by levering off the tracks. When buying ask for the sliding section to be on the inside and for anti-lift blocks. Multi-locking systems are recommended or have mortise security bolts with removable keys at the top and bottom of both doors. Existing patio doors can be fitted with additional security bolts to stop lifting or forced entry.

Door viewer

If you don't have a window in the door or some other way of checking who is calling, fit a door viewer. Look through this to identify callers before you open the door.

Door chains

These allow the door to be opened a short distance to allow checking of identification. They can stop callers pushing their way in, but must be securely fixed to avoid screws being pulled out. They do not contribute to security of a locked door against burglary.

Hinges

Check that the door hinges are sturdy and secured with strong, long screws. For added security, fit hinge bolts or security hinges. These are inexpensive, help to reinforce the hinge side of a door against force and protect the hinge if your door opens outwards.

Letterboxes

Never hang a spare key inside the letterbox. This is an obvious place that a thief will check. Letterboxes should be at least 400mm (16 inches) from any locks. Consider fitting a letterbox cage or other restrictor, which prevents thieves from putting their hands or

gadgets through the letterbox and trying the latches from the inside.



Locks

Mortise deadlock

Mortise locks fit into a slot cut into the edge of the door and usually can only be opened with a key. These should be upgraded to 5-lever locks tested to BS: 3621. This is usually a minimum insurance requirement. The locks are based on a range of standard measurements so, with careful matching, replacement is easy. The deadlock means a thief can't smash a nearby glass panel to open the door from the inside or, having entered through a window, cannot carry your belongings out through the door.

Rim lock or Night latch

A rim lock is screwed to the face of the door and latches automatically when you close the door unless held open with the snib. Unless it also has the term deadlock attached, it can be opened by turning a knob. Rim locks should be tested to BS:3621

Automatic deadlocking rim lock

This locks automatically when the door is closed and is more secure than other types of rim latch. It needs a key to open it from both the inside and the outside and should meet BS: 3621.

Ideally both types of lock should be fitted to a door at roughly one third spacing. Both being used to secure the empty home and just the night latch for regular use during occupancy.

Multi-point locking involves several hooks or bolts holding the door into the frame. The lock cylinders should be tested to BS EN 1303 Grade 3 and can be replaced.

If your door is BS: PAS24 and it requires replacement locks ensure they are changed like for like to continue the level of security.



Windows

Windows are a popular point of entry for burglars through breaking glass or just being left open.

If you are replacing windows, take the opportunity to install windows certified to British Standard BS7950 'Windows of Enhanced Security' and consider using laminated glass in ground-floor and accessible windows such as those above a flat roof.

Ground floor opening windows and easy to reach windows such as above a flat roof or near a drainpipe should have locks unless used as a fire escape in which case laminated glass still provides security. Even small windows such as skylights or bathroom fanlights need locks. If a thief can get their head through, with a bit of effort the body can follow.

Grilles, Shutters & Window Protection

Consider fitting security grilles or shutters to vulnerable windows - but only if these windows are not escape routes in case of fire. Glazing may be further protected with the addition of accredited adhesive window film.



Gardens, gates and fences

Identify your private property with fences, gates, walls or planting.

A thorny hedge along the boundary of your property can put thieves off. But make sure that passers-by can still see the front of your home so that a burglar can't work without being seen.

- Prevent easy access to the back and sides of your home by locked gates, 2 metre minimum fencing or walls. Trellis topping also makes climbing difficult.
- Burglars don't like gravel; it's noisy to walk on.
- Security lighting should make offenders feel vulnerable and observed, should illuminate high risk areas and allow occupiers to see persons approaching.
- Security lighting should not cause light pollution, annoy neighbours or blind occupiers from identifying callers.
- Remove and secure items that may be used to break in or climb up. Ladders and garden tools should be locked away.



Garages and sheds

Garages and sheds are often full of expensive tools to steal or use to break into the house.

Do not leave a garage or garden shed unlocked, especially if it has a connecting door to the house.

- Fit strong padlocks and hardware to shed and garage doors, making sure that the doors are solid enough not to be kicked in.
- Fit locks or bars to windows.
- Lock ladders inside your garage or shed.
- Consider lockable steel boxes or anchor posts fitted to the floor to secure tools and equipment.
- Gardens tools and machinery should be permanently marked with your postcode.

Your possessions

Property Marking

Marking your belongings will help you and the police identify them if they are stolen. It can make it difficult for the thief to dispose of the property and may provide the vital evidence for prosecution.

Items should be visibly and permanently marked and this may be achieved in various ways.

- Inscribing or etching your postcode plus the number of your house or flat or the first two letters of its name.
- Using a commercial marking product giving your postcode or a reference and number unique to you and the product. The effectiveness of the product is indicated by being tested to standard LPS 1225 or BS: 7799.
- If your property and personal details are held on a property database it should pass LPS1224 or BS: 7799 standards.
- Ultra-violet postcode marking can be removed and can fade in months. It should therefore be used as part of a specialist product, such as chemical trace liquids or microdots painted on internal or hidden components.
- Keep a record of the make, model and serial number of valuables.
- Works of art and difficult to describe items should be photographed.
- Keep lists and photographs safe with your insurance policy and update any record or database if you sell or dispose of items.



Computers

With computers so integrated with our domestic lifestyle and more people working from home the data and hours of lost effort are equally if not more valuable as the technology.

- Security enclosures and cables are available for desk-tops, laptops and digital video projectors.
- Back-up data regularly and store safely away from the computer.
- Use passwords and activate firewalls for Internet connections, particularly if using wireless networks.

Cars, caravans & boats



Whilst car security has improved they remain a valuable target and mass production can mean that loopholes in security can become common knowledge and additional security is required. Keys can be obtained through burglary, hooking through letter boxes and threats to owners. Caravans, trailers and boats can be easily stolen and their appearances changed.

- Tracking devices can be hidden and activated following theft to allow early trace and recovery by the police.
- Do not leave keys close to letter boxes or open windows.
- Wheel clamps and hitch locks should be fitted to trailers and caravans.
- Some property marking products can be used to identify trailers, boats and caravans.

The police and the British Parking Association operate the **Safer Parking Award** which recognised those car park operators that have added security features and management processes to reduce the risk of crime. Look for the **Park Mark** logo to identify safer places to park.



Alarms

Alarms act as a deterrent - telling the burglar you have taken preventive measures - and as an alarm warning that, in spite of your best efforts, your security has been breached. You should therefore consider alarms after the other physical security improvements have been determined.

- Alarms must meet the standard BS: EN50131
- Obtain at least 3 quotes from companies inspected by NSI or SSAIB.
- Monitored alarms are those that pass messages to a monitoring centre for action by keyholders or the police.
- The police have strict rules to limit their attendance at false alarms. Ask the installer for details or check the page on our web site.
- Monitored alarms should have a monitored telephone line and back-up in case of an attack on the telephone line.
- Alarms need maintenance, so ask installers which parts you own, and what the monitoring and maintenance cost are each year.
- Non-monitored systems require a neighbour or passer-by to react to the bell or siren. The police do not attend these systems unless the neighbour is able to report other suspicious circumstances.
- In your absence you need keyholders to reset alarms.
- Keep neighbours on your side. Solve false alarm problems, minimise alarm noise and look after each others security interests.

More advice on preventing crime

Your local police crime prevention officer will also be able to give you helpful advice on preventing crime. Contact your local police station or find your local architectural liaison officer on our web site and ask for your local CPO contact. In some forces both do the same job.

Many homes have been built to incorporate the **Secured by Design** specifications but unfortunately many builders of new homes do not incorporate effective security to our minimum standards. If you are buying a new home ask about the security, does it meet our standards, is it **Secured by Design**? See our home page for the full requirements for new homes.

Fire safety

When you are fitting security devices, you must consider the risk of fire and not fit systems that will prevent escape from occupied buildings. For example, fitting and padlocking a steel bar gate over the face of a standard front door in a house will impede escape and misplacing the extra keys may prove fatal. On the other hand, a BS: PAS24 door and frame provides better security and does not increase the fire risk. A window that may be used as a fire escape to a flat roof should not have a lock and key, but if fitted with laminated glass still provides security.

Security checklist

Here's a quick reminder of some of the things you can do to improve the security around your home.

- If you replace a door it is better to buy a new "door set" certified to British Standard PAS 24-1 'Doors of Enhanced Security'.
- Glass panels on or around doors are especially vulnerable, so it's worth replacing them with laminated glass.
- When buying a new patio door ask for the sliding section to be on the inside and for anti-lift blocks. Existing patio doors can be fitted with additional security bolts to stop lifting or forced entry.
- Mortise locks should be upgraded to 5-lever locks tested to BS: 3621. Rim locks should be tested to BS: 3621. Multi-point locking involves several hooks or bolts holding the door into the frame. The lock cylinders should be tested to BS EN 1303 Grade 3 and can be replaced.
- If you are replacing windows, take the opportunity to install windows certified to British Standard BS7950 'Windows of Enhanced Security' and consider using laminated glass in ground-floor and accessible windows such as those above a flat

roof.

- Prevent easy access to the back and sides of your home by locked gates, 2 metre minimum fencing or walls. Trellis topping also makes climbing difficult.
- Security lighting should make offenders feel vulnerable and observed, should illuminate high risk areas and allow occupiers to see persons approaching.
- Fit strong padlocks and hardware to shed and garage doors, making sure that the doors are solid enough not to be kicked in and fit locks or bars to windows.
- Visibly and permanently marking your belongings will help you and the police identify them if they are stolen. It can make it difficult for the thief to dispose of the property and may provide the vital evidence for prosecution.

Crime Prevention - Fire Safety

Whilst the majority of those in the security industry provide a good service and quality products, there are those who overprice jobs, target older people with inappropriate security or sell products that may not be as secure as required. Use the following list to help you make choices and stay in control of the process. If in doubt do not buy or sign anything until you have sought advice.

- Check your security against the information on our web site to decide where you think you need to improve.
- If your budget is limited deal with doors, locks, windows and perhaps a small safe for passport, jewellery and valuable documents before you embark on alarms and CCTV.
- Identify at least 2, preferably 3 companies that deal with the type of security you need so you can compare quality and price.
- Choose suppliers by recommendation from friends, companies whose products have the Secured by Design Police Preferred Specification logo, or are members of a nationally recognised organisation specialising in security. See useful contacts below.
- You may be able to install or replace some security yourself using good DIY skills and products that have passed technical standards and tests. Secured by Design pages explain these.
- Tell the supplier which areas of security you believe you should improve and ask for written quotes detailing the work to be done and the cost.
- If the firm suggests you need additional security, check to see if the other firms quoting suggest the same.
- For alarms and electronic security ask which parts of the system will be owned by you and if there is any future maintenance or monitoring charge. If you do not own the whole system and you cancel the maintenance contract you may lose protection.
- If you are uncertain about the company or what you are being offered ask a friend or relative to help. The Citizens Advice Bureau and Neighbourhood Watch are often aware of unreliable firms.
- Check identity before allowing strangers or installers into your home.

DO NOT:

- Discuss your security needs with door-step callers or telephone-sales staff.
- Agree to work unless a written quote is given detailing the work and cost.
- Disclose personal information, such as health problems, high risk items, such as jewellery, valuable stamp collections or artwork until you have decided on the security supplier AND you consider it necessary for security protection, such as requesting a safe or a special alarmed area.
- Go to your bank or cash machine with the installer / salesman to withdraw cash.
- Pay for all the work until the job is completed to your satisfaction.