

## **ADVICE FROM THE POLICE:**

- Close and lock all your doors and windows, even if you are only going out for a few minutes.
- Set your burglar alarm, do routine checks on your alarm to ensure it is working correctly.
- Make sure the side and/or back gate is locked.
- Lock your shed or garage (Criminals will use tools to gain access)
- Make sure that any valuables are not in sight.
- Put keys out of reach of letterboxes.
- In the evening, shut the curtains and leave some lights on. If you go out timer switches can be used to make it look like someone is in the property.
- Never leave car documents or ID in obvious places such as kitchens or hallways. These items can be placed into a lockable safe, ideally fixed to a floor.

## **Making your home as difficult to get into as possible will help deter criminals, and that starts with your boundaries.**

- Front boundaries should be no more than one metre high so burglars can be seen.
- Side and driveway gates should be a minimum of 1.8 metres high and the same height as the boundaries around them. Planning permission may be required.
- See through metal side and driveway gates are good because they allow intruders to be seen. Add extra security with an anti-climb top.
- Gravel driveways and paths make a silent approach more difficult.
- Store wheelie bins or other potential climbing aids behind locked gates, so burglars can't climb up on them.
- Wooden gates can be secured with two hasps and staples and two closed shackle padlocks near the top and the bottom, to prevent leverage.
- Rear and side boundaries should be a minimum of 1.8 metres high. Planning permission may be required.
- Planting dense or spiky climbing plants acts as an additional deterrent.
- Be aware that using barbed wire, carpet gripper or broken glass on top of walls or fences could cause injury which the occupier could be liable for.
- Burglars don't want to be seen or heard so setting off an alarm and attracting attention is their enemy.
- To maximise the deterrent, place external active burglar alarm bell boxes (with flashing lights and sounders) at the front and back of the property.
- A lot of modern burglar systems are linked to private security companies or they can be programmed to ring you on your mobile phone and the Police.
- CCTV can be placed in and around your property, a lot of time this can be a deterrent as criminals do not like to be seen.
- A lot of modern CCTV systems are motion detected and can alert you on your mobile phone if any incidents are taking place.

## **SECURING YOUR BOUNDARIES**

Doors and windows are the primary route of entry and exit for most burglars, so it's vital that you know what the safest kinds of doors and locking systems are. Remember to take this guide with you if you are considering buying new ones.

### **DOORS**

Doors are the primary route of entry and exit for most burglars, so it's vital you secure them effectively. You can improve home security by making simple adjustments to your front door, for example, ensure you have adequate locks and security fittings.

- The door should be fitted with a 5 lever mortice deadlock.
- Ensure that the frame is strong and will support the door, hinges and lock.
- Make sure the door is suitable for external use and is a minimum of 45mm thick.
- Letterboxes should have an internal cover plate.
- For additional safety and security fit a spy hole and door chain.
- Do not leave house keys in or near the door as they can get removed through the letterbox.
- If you have Glazed doors at your property make sure any glass panels are at least 6.4mm thick and are either laminated, or reinforced with security film. Consider using internal grilles if there is a risk that lock releases could be accessed via a broken pane of glass.

### **MULTI-LOCKING HANDLES**

If your doors have multi-locking handles, make sure that you always lock the door with a key. Simply closing the door and pushing the handle up will not prevent someone entering. Ensure that you engage the multi-locking mechanism and that the door is securely locked – **LIFT, LOCK, REMOVE**.

Remember to keep the key in a safe place out of sight in case of fire.

### **PATIO AND FRENCH DOORS**

Patio doors should have a minimum of three locking points, with an anti-lift device to prevent them being lifted from their runners.

## **DOORS AND WINDOWS**

### **COMMUNAL DOORS**

Care has to be taken when securing communal doors as the ability to escape in case of fire is vital. You should always be able to open the communal door (from inside) using a single keyless action. If you fit an automatic door closer, it should be of a good quality. Poor quality closers can fail to engage the lock. Locking mechanisms vary, depending on access control and door type.

### **WINDOWS**

Windows are often used as either an entry or exit route for burglars. Properties with windows left open or unsecured locks are a desired target for the opportunist burglar.

All accessible windows must have key operated locks, unless they are being used as a fire escape. Key operated locks are essential. Window handles should be multi-locking, with shoot bolts into the frame. Extra security can be added to externally beaded windows with security clips, security tape or sealant. Louvre window panes must be secured to prevent them being removed, or consider replacing them with a solid glass panel. If you have locks on your windows never leave the keys in.

## SECURITY LIGHTING

- Lights can be used in a variety of ways to deter burglars at night.
- Exterior lights will make it more difficult for burglars to stay undetected when they're trying to break in. Make sure they're designed to be tamper-proof or at least positioned where it's difficult for intruders to reach them.
- As a further deterrent, you can also leave interior lights switched on or use timer switches to make it look as if you're at home – even when you're out.
- In most cases, the preferred and cost-effective security lighting option is low wattage bulbs activated by photo-electric cell which will automatically switch on from dusk till dawn.
- The alternative of passive infra-red lights can be accidentally triggered by pets or wild animals and must be thoughtfully positioned to avoid annoying your neighbours.
- A lot of new security lighting systems now contain LEDs (Light Emitted Diodes) the bulbs are cost effective to run and can produce a good flow of light.
- Marking or etching your postcode and house number on items that are particularly valuable is a good deterrent to thieves because they know these items are more easily traced by the police, and it reduces their ability to sell these items on.

## PROPERTY MARKING

Marking your property can make it difficult for thieves to sell it on – and help you recover anything that does get stolen. The Police can talk you through the best way to mark specific items – whether that's indelible pen or with one of the proprietary chemically-coded systems now available i.e. Smartwater.

**“Smartwater can be purchased from Stroud Police station for £12.50. Once the pack is purchased inside is a document for you to fill in and send off, this enables you to register the Smartwater pack to your home address. You can place stickers in the windows of the property to warn criminals that it is being used.**

**The system is visible only under UV light and contains a unique code, Police will execute warrants and any items recovered will be checked to see if they are marked. When offenders are arrested they are also checked for the smartwater. It is very hard to get off clothes and skin. (you won't have to worry about getting it on yourself)”**

- There are numerous ways of property marking your possessions, some more permanent than others.
- You can use UV or indelible pens, postcode etching or chemically coded systems. By visibly marking your property with your postcode and house number (or flat letter) or the first three letters of a house name, and illustrating this fact to thieves (using window stickers), you reduce the risk of burglary by removing the benefit.
- Additionally, if marked, your property can be traced, identified and returned to you.
- Items with a unique serial number can be registered for free at <http://www.immobilise.com> – the **UK National Property Register**.
- Registration increases the chance of having your property returned.
- You should also think about photographing highly valuable items such as jewellery, paintings or antiques.

**For the best results:**

- Use a non-reflective background
- Put a ruler next to the item to provide a sense of scale of size
- Make sure there is enough light
- Make sure the object is in focus
- Keep the pictures in a safe place
- Think about giving a second copy of the pictures to a trusted friend or relative.

If you would like a crime prevention survey carried out, please contact  
[mark.lifton@gloucestershire.police.uk](mailto:mark.lifton@gloucestershire.police.uk)

PCSO Mark Lifton.

Dursley Police Station

**Police mobile (07816) 212 734.**