

Home Security: Burglary Prevention

Help us to help you prevent burglary

The Met is cracking down on burglary. We understand that it can be financially costly and emotionally devastating for victims and their families.

However, by taking just a few simple measures you can dramatically reduce the chances of it happening to you.

Most burglaries tend to be opportunistic rather than planned. So if your home does not look secure, seems unlivable, or provides unobserved access, it could be at risk. Understanding what burglars look for when choosing their target will help you identify weak spots in your home's security.

Our 10 Top Tips:

1. Mark or etch your property with your postcode, house or flat number or the first three letters of your house name.
2. Register items with a serial number at: www.immobilise.com
3. Do not leave your car keys or ID documents near doors, letterbox or windows.
4. Always check who's at the door and don't open it if you feel anxious.
5. Close and lock all your doors and windows, even if you are only going out for a few minutes.
6. Keep your valuables out of sight.
7. Leave some lights on if it will be dark before you get home.
8. Install a visible burglar alarm.
9. Always keep sheds and outbuildings locked.
10. Cancel milk or other deliveries if you will be away for days or weeks at a time.

How does a burglar's mind work?

Burglary, on the whole, is an opportunist crime. A burglar will select his target because it offers him the best opportunity to carry out his crime undetected and with the fewest number of obstacles in his way. A building that presents itself as unoccupied and insecure is far more likely to be targeted than one which is properly secured:

- Side gates open
- Accessible windows open
- Ladders left out, allowing access to otherwise inaccessible windows
- Garden tools available to force entry
- Untrimmed hedges or high fences preventing natural surveillance

Each of these makes access to the building far simpler and is an indication to the prospective burglar that it's worth a second look.

Residents of multi occupancy dwellings or flats should be mindful not to grant entry to people via an entry phone system, if they do not know them, and to be cautious of people seeking to 'tailgate' them into buildings.

The question is, are the occupants in?

- Milk bottles or parcels on the doorstep
- Newspapers and mail in the letter box
- Unlit houses after dark
- All windows shut in very hot weather

These are signs telling the burglar that he is unlikely to be disturbed in the course of his work. Naturally, circumstances may arise when such situations may be unavoidable. If we can take measures that tell the burglar that this building is too difficult or too risky a target, he will hopefully move on.



TO STOP A BURGLAR, YOU NEED TO THINK LIKE ONE.

To a burglar, a stuffed letter box is a dead giveaway when you're not at home. Ask a neighbour to remove your post while you are away.

Are you leaving a thief the key to your house?

- Never leave a spare key concealed anywhere near the front door - burglars know all the hiding places
- Prevent letterbox burglaries by storing keys away from the front door
- Do not label your house keys in case you lose them and they fall into the wrong hands.

Remove temptation

- Where possible, try to keep valuables out of sight from windows.

Make it look as though your house is occupied

- Install timers which switch lights or radios on and off automatically.
- Have a neighbour or friend pop round to clear your letter box or doorstep.
- Encourage a neighbour to park on your drive.
- If going out after dark, draw the curtains, leave some lights on and a radio playing.



TO STOP A BURGLAR, YOU NEED TO THINK LIKE ONE.

To a burglar, a dark doorway is an opportunity to hide. Fit a security light over your front door to deter burglars.

If you are away for extended periods.

- Cancel the delivery of milk and newspapers
- Disconnect the telephone answering machine, or re-word your greeting message to give the impression that you are only temporarily unable to answer.
- Enlist the help of a neighbour, friend or relative to keep a regular eye on your property and keep the front door clear of deliveries.
- If you are prepared to leave a key with a willing neighbour/relative, ask for curtains to be drawn and lights to be put on at night. If snow is on the ground a few footprints will make the house appear inhabited.
- Check your insurance policy. Some insurance policies for contents don't cover you if you are away for more than 30 days.
- Set your burglar alarm.
- If you do not have an alarm, consider investing a few pounds in a dummy alarm box. It may well deter the opportunist thief.

Remember: Remove the Opportunity - Prevent the Burglary



TO STOP A BURGLAR, YOU NEED TO THINK LIKE ONE.

To a burglar, a dark house is an empty house. Attaching a timer to a lamp will make your home appear occupied even when it isn't.