

CRIME PREVENTION FACTSHEET: BURGLARY

What is burglary?

A burglary is where items are taken without permission from your property, following someone gaining illegal entry. The impact of burglary isn't just financial; it can also have a significant impact on your emotional well-being and sense of security.

The common methods burglars use to break into homes are:

- Through open windows and insecure doors
- Fishing for keys through a letter plate, window or even a cat flap
- By communal doors left insecure or wedged open
- Using force on inadequate doors or windows
- Slipping locks

What can I do to protect my property against burglary?

There are several simple steps you can take to reduce your risk of burglary:

- Close and lock your doors and windows when you go out, even if you are just in the garden
- Fit a burglar alarm and test it frequently
- Where possible, fit dead locks to the doors and don't leave the keys where they can be seen or reached through the letter box
- Install security lights
- Leave a light on in a room and draw the curtains when you go out at night
- Buy home insurance. It's cheaper than paying out to replace any stolen possessions

Your shed, garage or outbuilding could also be a target for criminals. These tips will help you to secure your valuable items:

- Make sure all outbuildings are in good condition and if they aren't, don't leave valuable items inside
- Use good quality padlocks with covers so they cannot be easily cut off
- Never leave tools or ladders lying around in the garden
- Make sure side gates/sheds are locked and keep boundary fences, walls and gates in good repair
- Take photographs of valuable property so that if the police recover it after a burglary, it will be proof that they are yours

Going away?

Avoid becoming an easy target for holiday burglars by:

- Remembering to cancel deliveries before you go away
- Keeping an eye on your neighbour's property and encourage them to do the same for you. Report anything suspicious to us on 101

- Breaking down any boxes you are throwing out, put them in rubbish bags and place them inside the wheelie bin

Not all burglars wear balaclavas ... Not sure? Don't open the door

Some burglars pretend to be someone they're not so that they can get into your house. Why go to the trouble of breaking in if they can just knock on your door and be invited in? They might pretend to be bogus officials from the water, electricity or gas board, council or police and make up a story to get into your home. This method is called a distraction burglary.

It is important that you take care over who you let in to your home. Never let someone into your house because you don't want to seem rude or unsympathetic. Always be on your guard when anyone you're not expecting - a man, woman or even a child - turns up at your door. An honest face or good story can hide a trick to get into your home. Take a moment to:

STOP - Before you answer the door, stop and think if you are expecting anyone. Make sure your back door and any other doors leading outside are locked before you go to the front door

CHAIN - Open the door with the chain or door bar in place. These act as a barrier when talking to unexpected callers. Talk through a window if you can

CHECK - Always ask for ID. Genuine callers will always have identification. If you are still uncertain, phone the organisation they say they are from and confirm the person's identity. Genuine callers will be happy to wait

If you are in any doubt do not let them in, keep everything locked and call **101**. Where a crime is ongoing or if there is an immediate risk to life you should dial 999.

Protecting electronic devices

Gadgets are hot property. Stolen and sold on quickly, electronic devices are easy wins for thieves. Keep electronics safe by:

- Considering taking out insurance
- Registering your gadget free with [Immobilise](#) on 0870 1123123
- Never leaving electronic devices unattended, especially when out and about
- Always locking your device with a PIN code
- Keeping a note of the make and model, your phone number, the serial/IMEI number. This is the 15-digit number which helps to identify your phone. It can be accessed by keying in #06# into most phones or by looking behind the battery of your phone)
- Downloading a Find My Phone App to protect your phone and the personal information held on it
- If your device is stolen or lost, block it immediately across all networks by phoning your network provider or [Immobilise](#) on **0870 1123123** if you've registered

- Backing up your data, for example your contact list, photographs using cloud based storage or on a portable device
- Not keeping personal information such as bank details, home address or other data on your phone. If your phone is stolen, the information could be used by criminals to commit identity fraud
- Being careful when charging your phone on someone else's computer or at a charge point. A lot of phones combine a data connection with the charger so you could end up having your personal data stolen without realising it

Keep your jewellery safe

Don't give anyone the opportunity to steal your precious family heirlooms or cherished pieces by following this advice:

- Whether you are out or at home, always lock your doors and windows
- When you are not wearing your jewellery keep it somewhere safe and out of sight
- Invest in a lockable concealed safe, for your home and use it
- Invest in a burglar alarm and remember to turn it on
- Insure your jewellery. If it is already insured, make sure your policy is up-to-date
- Photograph your pieces and upload them to the Immobilise website so, if they are lost or stolen, you stand a better chance of getting them back
- Be discreet with your jewellery in crowded, public places. Don't make yourself a target for an opportunist thief