

Norfolk & Suffolk Crime Prevention

Guidance Note

Home Security



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NORFOLK
CONSTABULARY
Our Priority is You

Home Security Checklist

This document is designed to give you guidance and advice on how to increase your home security and reduce the likelihood of becoming a victim of crime.

Below is a self-assessment form with a list of points to consider; if you answer 'yes' to most of the statements then your security should be good, if the answer is 'no' then we advise you to consider taking appropriate action where possible, and practical.

Most burglaries are committed by 'opportunist' criminals - that are just passing by and notice a window left open, or a house that looks unoccupied.

Home Office figures show nearly 80% of household burglaries happen during the daytime.

The following self-assessment will help you to identify areas where you can improve your security and reduce the risk of becoming a victim.

For Further Crime Prevention Advice:-

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Doors and Windows

Installing doors and windows to the 'Secured by Design' standard can greatly enhance the security of a property. A list of manufacturers and suppliers can be found on www.securedbydesign.com. The strongest doors and windows can still be overcome if not locked properly. A good routine should be established to prevent a burglar taking advantage of an open window or insecure door:

Check	Yes/No	Further Information
My door meet British standards		<p>There are many different types of doors from Timber to uPVC and it's important that you check they are fit for purpose:</p> <p>Timber doors should be fitted with an approved five lever lock to BS 3621 along with strong bolts to the top and bottom of the door.</p> <p>UPVC doors should be fitted with a robust three point locking system with a three star anti-snap cylinder to BS TS007.</p> <p>Make sure your door frame is strong and fixed securely to the wall.</p> <p>If you are replacing a door, it should comply with the British Standard PAS 24 -2012.</p> <p>Manufacturers of these standards of doors</p>

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		<p>and windows can be found at: www.securedbydesign.com.</p> <p>You should also consider fitting a suitable door restrictor to check visitor's identity before opening the door fully.</p>
My Windows Are Secure		<p>Windows are the most frequent point of entry in burglaries. Often the burglar will break the glass to open the window and reach in to open the window. Most burglars avoid climbing through a broken window to avoid the risks of leaving DNA forensic evidence.</p> <p>Lock your windows and remove the key. This would deter most offenders.</p> <p>Window locks can be cheap and easy to fit and there are models to fit every sort of window on the market. Experience tells us that if they are easy to operate then you are more likely to use them.</p> <p>Any new windows should be certificated to PAS 24.</p>
My Patio Doors are Secure		<p>Patio doors especially older styles are more vulnerable. An anti-lift device could be installed to prevent sliding patio doors from being lifted out of their tracks. Locks fitted to should also be to British Standard 3621 or British Standard EN 1303 for cylinder locks.</p>
I have a secure Letter Box		<p>Consider fitting a letterbox cage or other restrictor, which prevents thieves from putting their hands through the letterbox and gaining access to latches and keys.</p>
I lock my doors at all times when I'm at home		<p>Keep your doors and windows locked when you're at home, even when you're out in the garden. Always remove keys from doors</p>

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		<p>when you go out.</p> <p>Remember to balance security along with your own safety. Safety should take priority when you are in your home and security should take priority when you are out.</p> <p>Do you have a fire plan? Have you tested it and your smoke detectors?</p>
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Alarms

Installing an alarm can help protect your home. There are two main types:

Linked/Monitored – which means that someone is monitoring it or it is linked to the police. Gives the best response but is more expensive than Audible systems.

Audible – gives a loud decibel sound and alerts nearby residents/neighbours (if they are home).

Alarm boxes should be fixed in a prominent position on the outside of your home, which will act as a visual deterrent. Alarms should meet any conditions set by your insurer.

All alarms need to be regularly maintained as false activations can become an annoyance for your neighbours and a waste of police resources.

Several false alarms from the same location may mean that police stop responding.

<p>I have a Burglar Alarm</p>		<p>Many burglars will avoid breaking into a property with an alarm and will seek out properties without.</p> <p>If you already have a burglar alarm, USE IT!</p> <p>Set it when you leave the house as well as at night when you go to bed.</p>
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		<p>Ensure the alarm is regularly serviced.</p> <p>If you are considering installing an alarm, choose carefully. It's tempting to look at the price first but make sure it will do the job. We recommend that you contact either :National Security Inspectorate (NSI) or Security Systems and Alarm Inspection Board (SSAIB)</p>
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Garages & Sheds

Garages and sheds are often full of expensive tools, which are not only of value to a thief but ideal to use for breaking into your home!

I've secured my Garage and or Shed		<p>Never leave a garage or garden shed unlocked, especially if it has a connecting door to the house. A burglar could get in and work on the door inside without being seen. If the connecting door is a fire door, make sure that any security improvements or alterations will not compromise the effectiveness of it in the event of a fire.</p> <p>Fit strong closed shackle padlocks to shed and garage doors and make sure that the doors are solid enough not to be kicked in.</p> <p>Lock ladders inside your garage or shed to stop them being used to reach upstairs windows. If there is no room in your garage or shed, chain or padlock them horizontally to a sturdy bracket on an outside wall.</p> <p>Consider fixing lockable steel boxes to the floor to store your tools in or anchor posts</p>
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	<p>fitted to the floor to secure larger tools and equipment.</p> <p>Visibly and permanently mark property with your house number and postcode.</p> <p>Consider purchasing a low cost shed/ garage audible stand-alone alarm system.</p> <p>There are many different types of garage doors and it's important that you choose the right locking system. Research carefully before you buy or ask your local police station for advice.</p>
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Gardens

It's not just the house you need to consider there are things you can do in the garden to improve your security.

<p>I've considered my garden</p>	<p>A thorny hedge along the boundary of your property can put thieves off. Keep hedging low so that passers-by can still see the front of your home and that a burglar can't work without being seen.</p> <p>Gravel is noisy to walk on and act as a deterrent.</p> <p>Don't build pergolas, gazebos too near to the house, they can help burglars reach upper windows.</p>
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Fencing

Fencing is often the first line of defence when it comes to deterring a thief. It can offer a barrier which is either difficult to climb or helps define your property. Please consider the following advice:

I Have Secure Fences

Securing the perimeter of your garden is the first line of resistance.

Check for weak spots in your fences/gates and boundaries.

A low level fence and gate (approx. 1m high) at the front of your house allows any potential burglar to be seen by you and/or your neighbours.

At the rear of your house use fencing approximately 1.8m high or 1.5 with 300 m of trellis as this provides natural surveillance from neighbours and the trellis is difficult to climb.

Strategic planting along boundaries can also deter intruders. Consider planting Berberis, Blackthorn or Firethorn, or any other prickly bushes.

Gates leading to the rear of the house should ideally be in line with the front of the house. This increases the chances of you or your neighbours seeing someone trying to access them.

Close and LOCK gates at all times.

Trees and shrubs should always be well trimmed back to create an open view and eliminate any hiding places.

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Lighting

A burglar will do everything they can to avoid being seen. During the hours of darkness, a home without any lights on indicates not only that it may be empty but that neighbours are unlikely to see anyone approaching.

I have considered lighting as a security measure

Lighting can be very effective as a deterrent as burglars prefer to hide in the shadows.

Dusk to Dawn lighting use low energy bulbs fitted within a sensor that is designed to come on during the hours of darkness.

There are many different types which are often easy to fit and relatively cheap to run.

Use timer switches on internal lights so they switch on and off automatically and make it look like there is someone at home.

Property and Security Marking

By taking simple steps you can ensure that your property remains yours.

I've made sure my valuables are secure and property marked.

Ensure that valuables like laptops, handbags and jewellery can't be seen from the window. Don't keep expensive jewellery in obvious places such as jewellery boxes. Use a safe or keep it hidden away.

Making a photographic inventory of your valuables, especially your jewellery could

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	<p>assist Police in their investigations and make it easier to reunite you with your valuables if they are recovered.</p> <p>Mark property using an Ultra violet marker pen with your post code and house number.</p> <p>Alternatively you could use an approved DNA solution such as Smart Water or Selectadna. Each kit is unique and registered on a database which can also make it easier to be reunited with any recovered items.</p> <p>Always mark the back or underside of items.</p> <p>If you move home, security mark all your items again.</p> <p>Consider registering all your property for free on www.immobilise.com . If your phone, bike, computer or other registered item is lost or stolen, immobilise informs the police, insurers and the second hand trade and helps in the recovery of your property.</p>
I've taken care of my cash and personal documents	<p>Don't leave large amounts of cash around the home or documents with your name, address or other personal details, such as a bank statement or bill that fraudsters could use.</p> <p>If you do keep large amounts of cash at home make sure it is in a safe and then banked the next day.</p>

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When I'm Out or on Holiday

Take simple steps to confuse the burglar. Don't make it obvious that the house is empty.

<p>I've left the house looking occupied when out.</p>		<p>A dark house will draw attention to a burglar. Taking a few simple precautions could reduce the risk of becoming a victim.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leave lights and a radio on a timer, when you're out for the evening or know you will come home when it's dark.• If it's dark before you go out draw the curtains.• Consider a TV simulator. These are cheap devices to make it look as if you have the TV on.
<p>I haven't hidden my spare keys outside, or in the garage or shed.</p>		<p>Burglars know that people hide spare keys under flowerpots, under doormats or in garages.</p> <p>If you do need to keep keys outside, always use a key safe. We recommend the Supra C500 Key Safe which is the only one approved by Police.</p>
<p>If I'm going on holiday, I've arranged for a friend or neighbor to collect the post and put the bins out.</p>		<p>Make your home appear occupied when you go away:</p> <p>Leave the lights on a timer for the evening.</p> <p>Consider a TV simulator as previously mentioned.</p> <p>Cancel the milk and papers.</p>

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		Ask a friend to open or close curtains and pick up your post. If possible ask neighbours to park any additional vehicles on the drive whilst you are away and to put your bins out for you.
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Other things to consider

Everyone's situation is different but here are a few other things you could consider.

I haven't made it easy for burglars.		<p>Make sure that no tools have been left out that could be used to commit crime in your property or your neighbours.</p> <p>Always lock them away in a secure area.</p> <p>Make sure your wheelie isn't left where it can be used as a climbing aid onto a flat roof, through a window or over a gate/fence – anchor it to something secure.</p> <p>If you have a drain pipe which could be climbed to gain access to an upstairs window use anti-climb paint with the appropriate signage.</p> <p>Always lock bikes and toys away at the end of the day and make sure bikes are property marked.</p>
I'm a member of a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme		<p>In some areas there are Neighbourhood Watch or Homewatch schemes.</p> <p>Consider joining such a scheme - or even starting one if there isn't one in your area.</p>

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		<p>Your local community needs your help in preventing and tackling all crime.</p> <p>Your local Safer Neighbourhood Team will be able to provide details of your local scheme.</p>
<p>If you live in a place with a communal entrance have you considered your security</p>		<p>If you live in a flat with a communal entry, never buzz strangers in. Tell them to come back when the person they want is in.</p> <p>When using communal doors, make sure strangers don't follow you in.</p> <p>Check ID of delivery drivers and don't leave items out for collection.</p> <p>If you don't know them, the simple advice is don't let them in. Get to know the other residents.</p>
<p>I'm careful when I answer the door</p>		<p>Use the spy hole and security chain on your door when answering it. If you don't have one then consider having one fitted. Check with your door manufacturer first for guidance on fitting and products.</p> <p>Check the IDs of visitors and ask them to pass their I.D to you. Don't use the telephone number they provide as it may be false. Check on line or phone directory for the business number.</p> <p>If you are unsure ask them to return when you have a family member or friend present. If they are genuine they won't mind.</p>

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		<p>“No Cold Calling” stickers can be a deterrent. They are free and can be found at most Police Stations or from Trading Standards.</p> <p>Don’t give out personal details to anyone on the phone. Police and Banks will not ask for your bank account details or ask you to withdraw cash.</p> <p><u>If in doubt keep them out!</u></p>
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How did you do?

Make a note of the improvement areas you think are most important.

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