

HOME SECURITY SELF ASSESSMENT

Home Office

Tick if no: **If you have ticked the box please consider:**

EXTERNAL DOORS

Does your front door have a robust deadlock i.e. a lock that requires a key to move the bolt forward into the frame?

- You should consider upgrading your locks. If you have a wooden door more than 44mm thick, a 5-lever mortice lock is best. If you have a PVC-u door, a 3 multi-point lock is the best option. For more information and advice contact your local police force and ask for their Crime Prevention Officer or Crime Prevention Design Officer.

Are your doors or frames free from damage caused by weathering or neglect?

- Even if you have good locks, it won't do any good if your doors and frames are not strong. You don't necessarily need to replace your doors and frames as there are products available to reinforce your doors. However, if your doors or frames are in very poor condition you may need to replace them. If so make sure that the doorset is certificated to British Standard PAS 24.

Are your front and back doors sufficiently strong to resist forced entry?

Do you have a robust deadlock on your back door?

- You should consider upgrading your locks. The locks on your back door should be the same standard as on your front door - see advice from question 1.

Do you lock your doors when you leave the house for even a few minutes?

- Make sure that you always remember to lock up properly when you leave your home - even if you just pop out for a few minutes.

Do you lock your doors at all times when you're home?

- Make sure you keep your doors and windows locked when you're at home, including when you're out in the garden.

WINDOWS

Are your windows and frames in good condition?

- Look at the condition of your window frames, as they can be easy to force if weakened by age. Again there are products available to reinforce them, and any new windows should be certificated to British Standard BS 7950.

Do your accessible windows (except those designated as a fire escape route) have locks with keys?

- Fit locks on all your accessible windows - including those that could be reached by a nimble burglar. There are a number of good locks available which are relatively cheap and easy to fit. PVC-u windows may require specialist locks. For more information and advice contact your local police force and ask for their Crime Prevention Officer or Crime Prevention Design Officer.

Do you keep your windows locked whenever you leave the house?

- Make sure that you always remember to lock windows as well as your doors when you leave your home.

PROPERTIES WHICH SHARE AN ENTRANCE

If you live in a flat with a communal entry, do you make sure you never buzz strangers in?

- Be extra careful about letting people in through shared front doors - if you don't know them the simple advice is don't let them in.

When entering through communal doors, do you ensure strangers can't follow you in?

GARAGES / SHEDS

Do you have strong locks on your shed or garage?

- Set about putting a strong padlock on your garage or shed. These often hold tools which are expensive to replace and could be used to break into your house.

If your garage is attached to your house, do you have deadlocks on connecting doors?

- Any door connecting your garage to your house should be treated in the same way as an external door - someone could get into the garage and work on the connecting door without being seen. See the advice on locks for doors in reply to question 1.

Do you always lock tools and ladders away?

- You should make sure that your tools and ladders are always locked away as these can be used to break into your home. Ladders can be locked to a sturdy bracket on an outside wall if you don't have a garage.

OUTSIDE SECURITY / ENVIRONMENT

Do you have working outside security lighting?

Good outdoor lighting can deter a burglar by making them fear detection or discovery. A low energy bulb installed within a light that is designed to come on during the hours of darkness is relatively easy to fit and relatively cheap to run.

Is your garden fence in good condition?
Is your garden fence high enough to make climbing over difficult?

Securing the perimeter of your garden can act as the first line of resistance. Check for weak spots in your fence, and make sure it's high enough to make climbing over the top difficult.

Are trees or shrubs outside your home trimmed well back?

These should always be well trimmed back so that burglars can't break in unobserved.

Do you have strong locks on your gate or side fence?

By having gates at the side of your house and making sure they are fitted with a decent lock you can stop burglars from easily getting into your garden.

PROPERTY MARKING

Have you marked the valuable property in your home?

Marking your property is the best way of reducing its value if it's stolen. Use your postcode and the number of your house or flat to clearly identify it. UV pens or chemical trace or microdot liquids can be used on objects that could be damaged by visible marking. Also remember to keep photographs of valuable items such as jewellery to aid identification.

Have you registered your mobile phone(s) with a property register company?
Have you registered serial numbers of your computers, MP3 players and other equipment?

Consider registering your property (mobile phones, MP3 players, laptops) with a company such as Immobilise (www.immobilise.com) – so that it can be traced back to you if it's recovered by the police amongst stolen items.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Are you a member of Neighbourhood Watch / Home Watch?

Consider joining such a scheme – or even starting one if there isn't one in your area. Your local community needs your help in preventing and tackling crimes like burglary. Your local Neighbourhood Police Team will be able to provide details of your local scheme.

BURGLAR ALARMS

Do you have a working burglar alarm?

Consider improving your security with a burglar alarm. Many burglars will avoid breaking into a property with an alarm and will seek out easier properties. Find out more in the Home Office's publication entitled 'Guide to Home Security'.

Do you set it whenever you leave, and at night when you go to bed?

Make sure that you always set your alarm when you leave your home and when you go to bed at night.

KEYS

Are you careful not to leave keys near a door or window?

Leaving keys within reach of a window, glass pane or in a lock could make a thief's job easier.

Do you make sure you don't have spare keys hidden outside?

It is not a good idea to leave keys outside. Burglars know that people hide spare keys under flowerpots, under doormats or in garages.

WHEN YOU ARE AWAY ON HOLIDAY

Do you ask friends to remove your post, turn on lights and open your curtains?

Take a few steps when going away on holiday to appear as though you are really at home. Ask a friend to open or shut curtains, turn lights on and off and remove your post. Cancel delivery of milk and papers.

WHEN YOU GO OUT IN THE EVENING

Do you leave a light on, other than the hall light, and shut the curtains?

Consider installing automatic switches to turn lights on whilst you are out in the evening and remember to shut the curtains.

SAFETY WITH PEOPLE AT THE DOOR

Do you make use of the door spy hole and security chain when you have a visitor?
Do you check IDs of strangers who say they are from a utility company?

Take extra precautions when answering the door if you're not expecting visitors; use a spy hole or security chain, and check IDs carefully if visitors say they're from utility companies or the council.

INTERNAL SECURITY

Do you have a home safe stored out of sight?

Consider buying a home safe to store your valuables like jewellery, and keep that stored out of sight.

Do you make sure you don't keep large amounts of cash at home?

It is not a good idea to keep large amounts of cash at home.

Do you keep valuable property away from windows?

Keeping valuables out of sight and away from the windows reduces the chance of a potential burglar seeing them.

HOME IMPROVEMENTS

When you fit new windows and doors do they comply with British Standards e.g. Kitemarked?

When making improvements to your home, look for doors and windows that comply with British Standards; PAS 24 for a new doorset and BS 7950 for windows. For more information and advice contact your local police force and ask for their Crime Prevention Officer or Crime Prevention Design Officer.