

Met Police Home Security Advice

**Maida Vale Safer
Neighbourhood Team
2019**

Security Survey Recommendations

RECOMMENDED PRODUCTS, MANUFACTURERS, SUPPLIERS & INSTALLERS

While you consider this report's recommendations based on your recent security survey, it is likely that you'll be pondering on which would be the best products for your situation. Whilst we can't recommend specific devices or manufacturers, we can point you in the right direction by way of nationally recognised security organisations and their appropriate certifications and accreditations, as shown below. For instance, if you're thinking about replacing some or all of your doors or windows, this is the opportunity to opt for those that are manufactured and tested to exacting technical and security standards.

In terms of doors, we recommend that you choose a doorset (door, frame and locks) that is certificated to BS PAS023 (general performance) and BS PAS024 (enhanced security). For windows, we recommend those certificated to BS 7950.

A wide range of security products, together with suppliers and manufacturers, are licensed through the Association of Chief Police Officers' (ACPO) endorsed **Secured by Design** (SBD) accreditation scheme as achieving 'Police Preferred Specification'. Details of SBD members, products, security standards and certification bodies, together with additional security advice, can be found in Secured by Design at www.securedbydesign.com or on ☎020 7227 3423☎

Locks should meet relevant British or European Standards where appropriate. Information on accredited suppliers and installers can be obtained through the **Master Locksmiths Association** (MLA); a list of its members, authorised to display the MLA logo, can be found at www.locksmiths.co.uk or on ☎01327 262255☎

A wide variety of security products carry the **Sold Secure** logo, indicating that they have passed the Sold Secure anti-theft test. Sold Secure is an attack test and assessment house for security products, owned by the Master Locksmiths Association. For further details, go to www.soldsecure.com or contact ☎01327 264687☎.

The **British Security Industry Association** is the professional trade association for accredited security companies, members of which can be found at www.bsia.co.uk or by contacting ☎0845 389 3889☎.

Additional security and safety advice and information can also be found at the following useful websites:

Metropolitan Police Service: www.met.police.uk/crimeprevention
Home Office: www.crimereduction.gov.uk
London Fire Brigade - Fire Safety: www.london-fire.gov.uk/fire_safety/fire_safety.asp

Bearing these information sources in mind, the following paragraphs make recommendations for enhancing your home security, based on existing installations and fittings.

FRONT DOOR

Only 30 years ago the traditional rim latch (Yale type) was commonly the sole means of securing the front door. However, national burglary increases, coupled with a tightening of minimum security requirements for insurance purposes and the raising of awareness through crime prevention campaigns have resulted in extensive research and substantial improvements in door and frame designs as well as security devices. The ideal front door security will be obtained by fitting an automatic deadlocking rim lock, one third from the top of the door, together with a mortice deadlock to British Standard 3621/European Standard EN12209 one third from the bottom, avoiding any construction joints.

Quality locks are as strong only as the doors and frames to which they are attached. Ensure that the frame is sound, bolted/screwed every 600 mm (24") into the surrounding walls. The door must be appropriate for external use; for instance, a wooden hollow core door would not be suitable. It should be of solid construction, at least 44 mm (1¾") thick to support the mortice lock and hung on three heavy-duty 100 mm (4") hinges. Consider fitting a London Bar (metal strip on frame side) to support the strike box, or Birmingham bar to support the frame on the hinge side. If the door is weak consider fitting a sheet steel plate or door reinforcer on the outside covering the lock area. If replacing the door, frame and locking mechanism (door set), aim for the BS PAS23 & PAS24 standards.

Doors with glazed panels are inherently less secure than solid doors, hence the need for a deadlock. Ordinary or toughened glass panels should be replaced with laminated glass - two pieces of glass bonded together with a sheet of laminate - as they offer much greater resistance to attack, ideally to a minimum thickness of 6.4 mm, but preferably 6.8 mm. This also applies to glazed panels adjacent to the door.

For added safety and security, fit a door viewer, no higher than 1500 mm (5'), allowing a view of the person at the door before you open it, and a door chain or limiter, to retain a level of security while you deal with callers on your doorstep.

Up to this point, the security advice refers to wooden doors. However, uPVC/PVCu front doors are generally unsuitable for retrofit security devices. Not only is the material not sufficiently strong to support devices fitted with steel screws unless secured into the internal metal framework, but such changes to the original design may invalidate an existing warranty or possibly damage the integral locking assembly. If in doubt, consult the installer/manufacturer. Modern designs will usually incorporate deadlock shoot bolts or a multi-point locking system, both throwing a number of bolts from the door into the frame. Under these circumstances there will not normally be any need for additional devices. If you are considering the installation of a uPVC/PVCu door, look for the type where entry is achieved by a key operation and not by a lever or handle.

IMPORTANT: Doors with multi-point locking security don't come without their own problems though. In theory they should be very secure, but only so long as they are finally locked with a key. Whilst the house is occupied, merely lifting, throwing or turning the handle from the inside to engage the locking system may appear to lock it, but in reality the door will not be 'locked' until the key is turned. Lulled into a false sense of security by lifting the handle alone, an increasing number of burglary victims have had to learn this lesson the hard way. ***Always key-lock ALL external doors whilst the occupants are asleep or whilst the home is otherwise unattended.*** It is important that fire safety considerations should be taken into account when locking up before going to bed. For more detailed advice, see the '***Fire Safety***' section later in this report.

Keys should never be left in the lock, especially if the door or its surrounds are glazed. Likewise, never leave the key in so close a proximity to the door as to enable external access to the key via a letter box. 'Hooking', the taking of house or car keys left close to the front door by the insertion of an extended hooked rod through the letterbox, is becoming something of a major problem and frequently results in the theft of the car as well.

If you have a porch with a door, this too should be made secure with appropriate locking devices. Most porches incorporate a high percentage of glazing, which, if not laminated and a minimum thickness of 6.4 mm, could be vulnerable if forced, negating any additional security which may have been installed.

Don't forget - it's a waste of time fitting front door security if you don't use it when you leave the house. "I was only gone for a few minutes", or "I just popped out to fetch the children from school" - common excuses for not engaging the mortice lock. Apart from the obvious reason of increased security, equally important factors are that:

- Engaging the mortice means that the door cannot be opened from the inside. The favoured exit route for burglars is through the front door, especially if carrying some of the larger electrical appliances. Restricting the means of escape can often limit the extent of the burglary.
- Failure to secure the house properly may result in difficulties when making insurance claims.

FLATS/APARTMENTS

Providing the front door is less than 4.5 metres above ground level the advice given thus far is applicable. However, in those situations where this is not the case, i.e., most typically flats two floors or more above ground level, the level

of security is directed, to a degree, by fire and building regulations. Their basis is that neither the occupants in their means of escape, nor the Fire Brigade in its role of rescuing trapped occupants, should be hindered unreasonably.

The locking device on the front/final exit door, if engaged, should not require a key to open it from the inside and this would exclude the use of standard mortice deadlocks. The recommendation is that the locks should be fitted in accordance with British Standard 5588, i.e. that exit from the flat is by the operation of a single action release, opening being achieved by means of a handle, lever or thumb turn.

FRENCH DOORS

Also known as French windows, these doors are intrinsically less secure than standard single leaf doors, which may reflect their comparative lack of popularity as compared with the modern patio door. However, this need not be the case provided that suitable security measures are taken.

Single French doors should be fitted with mortice rack bolts (bolts fitted within the door and operated internally by a threaded key), engaging into the top and bottom frames to provide rigidity. They should always be installed at 90° to the grain of the wood, reducing the likelihood of the wood splitting if subjected to pressure. In the case of double-leaf French doors, use surface-mounted locking bolts on each door (push to lock, key to open) top and bottom.

If the style of door is capable of it, a mortice sash lock should be fitted for extra security (rebate sets may also be required).

As most French Doors are outward opening, the addition of hinge bolts is also recommended. They should be located 100-150 mm (4-6") below the top hinge and similarly above the bottom. PS. It would be acceptable, for insurance purposes, for key operated bolts only to be fitted top and bottom of both doors.

Consider replacing ordinary or toughened glass panels with laminated glass - two pieces of glass bonded together with a sheet of laminate, to a minimum thickness of 6.4 mm, but preferably 6.8 mm - as they offer much greater resistance to attack.

uPVC/PVCu French doors are generally unsuitable for retrofit security devices. Not only is the material not strong enough to support devices fitted with steel screws unless secured into the internal metal framework, but such changes to the original design may invalidate an existing warranty or possibly damage the integral locking assembly. If in doubt, consult the installer/manufacture. Modern designs will usually incorporate deadlock shoot bolts or a multi-point locking system, both throwing a number of bolts from the door into the frame. Under these circumstances there will not normally be any need for additional devices.

WINDOWS ~ WOODEN SLIDING SASH

You cannot rely on traditional central sash fasteners. Sash stops are strong and convenient to use and do not need to be removed from the window when opening fully. They can be set into the top frame allowing the window to be left open no more than 130 mm (5") for ventilation but still secure. For optimum security fit in pairs.

An alternative lock is the dual screw. In effect, this bolts the two sashes together, giving an added bonus of reducing draughts, though if the sashes tend to swell or shrink, alignment of the screws might become a problem.

The beading securing the glass is frequently only pinned. The window can be made more secure, either by glueing as well as pinning, or screwing the beading in place if wide enough.

A modern style is the 'tilt to clean' sliding sash, not only sliding up and down but also tilting inwards for cleaning by undoing two clips on top of each moving sash. These should be secured by fitting both sash stops and dual screws.

If your home is going to be vacant for an extended period of time, an additional and effective security measure is to fit battens into the sash recesses, reinforcing the sash stops or dual screws against external force.

Ideally, all accessible single-glazed windows should be fitted with laminated glass of a minimum 6.4 mm thickness.

If you are considering replacing your existing windows, look for those certificated to BS 7950. It has been established to set specific manufacturing standards of construction and security for casement and sliding sash windows.

WINDOWS ~ uPVC / PVCu

In many cases it is not possible to retrofit any extra locks to UPVC windows. This is because the material used is not strong enough to support a metal lock fitted with steel screws. It could also damage the window and perhaps invalidate any existing warranty.

Double glazed window locking systems should be fitted at the time of manufacture. A general rule to follow is that the handle should not be the only means of keeping the window closed. The locking system should be fitted within the

framework and the handle is used as a means of throwing or engaging the internal device.

Always consult the manufacturer/supplier before attempting to fit any extra locks. There are locks that can be fitted to UPVC casement windows, but only if there is no integral locking system within the framework, typically where the only means of security is a locking handle.

There are two main types of locking systems:

- Firstly, espagnolette (multi-point) locking: these are bolts (normally 3 sets) set into the window and located into locking points in the frame when the handle is turned. The bolts should be mushroom-headed so that they can engage behind the locking point, thus enabling the window and frame to resist being forced apart.
- The second type is deadlock shoot bolts: these locate into the frame at both opening side corners. There is also a deadlock that secures the opening side of the window at the handle. The window can also be fitted with high security friction hinges that locate into the frame on the hinge side.

For additional strength, sections of hardened aluminium or galvanised steel reinforcements should be fitted at the time of manufacture within the hollow profiles of the windows and frames, so that the locking systems can be secured through the UPVC frames into the reinforcements.

As a general rule, it is preferable for the windows to be fitted with internal beading to avoid the possibility of the glass being removed from the outside by unclipping the external beading. There are some systems that do use external beading, but are secure only because the glass is adhered to the frame or secured by special tamper-proof clips.

Lastly, if you're considering replacing your existing windows, aim for those certificated to BS 7950. It has been established to set specific manufacturing standards of construction and security for casement and sliding sash windows.

BURGLAR ALARM

Alarm systems are a worthwhile investment in the protection of your home and family and are probably the single most effective measure you can take to improve your security. Studies reveal that it is far less likely that you will become the victim of a burglary at home if you have a correctly fitted, clearly visible and well-maintained burglar alarm. However, they should be regarded only as one element within a complete security package.

The variety of alarms and their fitting is a complex subject. As a starting point the system should comply with Police and Insurance requirements and be installed to European Standard EN50131 and PD6662. This type of installation refers to hard-wired systems as opposed to wire-free. Though more expensive than many wire-free or D-I-Y packages on the market, they are more reliable and conform to the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Security System Policy (2000). The only wire free system that conforms both to British Standards and the ACPO Security System Policy is a BS 6799 Class VI alarm (at this time there is no European Standard for wire-free systems). This type is typically more expensive than its hard-wired counterpart. Be aware that systems that claim to meet with British Standards, but don't specify PD6662 or BS 6799, may well be referring to the electrical standard and not that of the alarm system.

If you are thinking about installing an alarm system in your home it is worth taking into account that the police response to alarm activations varies according to the type of alarm installed. In recent years the percentage of false alarm calls caused by either equipment, communication or user error has represented in excess of 92% of all alarm activations nationally. In order to redress the balance in favour of genuine calls, the ACPO Security System Policy has been adopted by the Metropolitan Police Service, in which two types of alarms are defined, together with the relevant police response.

- **Type A** - Remote Signalling Systems, including intruder alarms, installed by compliant companies, terminating at BS 5979 recognised alarm receiving stations (ARCs) and employing confirmed alarm technology. They must be maintained and used in accordance with BS 4737, BS 7042 (high security systems) or BS 6799 Class VI (wire-free alarms) and PD6662 (European Standards). Such alarms will be registered with the police and identified by a unique reference number (URN) and can include personal attack alarms. The police response to their activation will be based on the assumption that an offence is taking place, but against the background of competing urgent calls and available resources. That response will also be regulated by the number of false activations accrued by an alarm system within the previous 12 months. The response levels are set out as follows:
 1. Immediate. Following 2 false calls in 12 months the response will move to:
 2. Police response is desirable but attendance may be delayed, dependent upon resource availability. 5 false calls in the previous 12 months will invoke:
 3. No Police attendance, keyholder response only, unless supported by additional evidence of an offence being committed.
- **Type B** - Non-Remote Security Systems, including bells-only and automatic dialling alarms, as well as alarms from non-compliant companies and non-compliant ARCs. URNs are not issued for these systems, which will attract a Level 3 response.

In identifying a compliant company installing Type A alarms you should seek answers to the following questions:

- (a) Before disclosing personal security details, have I checked the address and credentials of the company and seen proof of identity from the representative?
- (b) Is the company subject of an independent inspection process and if so which organisation?
- (c) Is the installation of an alarm a requirement of my insurance company and if so, is the company acceptable to my insurer?
- (d) Can the company representative provide me with a list of police rules for occupiers of premises with alarms and written confirmation that the alarm and the company are currently acceptable to the local police for the transmission of alarm messages from new installations.
- (e) Have I sought written quotations from at least two alarm installers?
- (f) Does the quotation
 - (i) specify that the installation will be to the European standard for the relevant security system?
 - (ii) include the terms of maintenance and monitoring contracts?
- (g) Does the company operate a 24-hour call-out service and emergency attendance within 4 hours?

Police accept the installation of remote signalling alarms from alarm companies whose business is subject to inspection by independent inspectorate organisations identified in the police policy. Currently these are:

- **NSI** (National Security Inspectorate, incorporating NACOSS), Sentinel House, 5 Reform Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 8BY - telephone 0845 006 3003 and

- **SSAIB** (Security Systems & Alarm Inspection Board), Suite 3, 131 Bedford Street, North Shields, Tyne & Wear, NE29 6LA - telephone 0191 296 3242.

Both organisations publish lists of relevant companies.

All alarm systems should have at least two keyholders, trained to operate the alarm, able to attend an activation within 20 minutes, contactable by telephone and with their own transport.

You may find that the cost of fitting an alarm system is lower than you expect. If several houses in a street or Neighbourhood Watch are considering installing alarm systems, it is possible that an installer may give a discount for multiple installations. What is more, it is possible that the cost of an installation could be partly offset by reduced household insurance premiums. You should be aware, however, that the insurer may stipulate that the alarm should be set at all times when the property is unoccupied, and that any claim for losses incurred as a result of a break-in while the alarm was not set may be adjusted accordingly.

It should also be remembered that alarm systems ought to be partially set at night to cover the unoccupied downstairs areas, even when the rest of the house is occupied. There is a creeping tendency, whether through complacency or to avoid false activations by occupants or their pets, not to set the alarm when going to bed. This leaves downstairs areas particularly vulnerable and burglars are aware of this. The same principles apply to flats or bungalows. Alarm installations usually have individually set pre-defined zones. Discuss your requirements with the installer.

GARDEN SECURITY

The garden should be seen as the first line of defence against burglars - the most vulnerable part of the house is at the rear to which access can be provided by way of an insecure rear garden. It is estimated that some 60% of all domestic burglaries, including flats and apartments, take place via the rear or side windows and doors. This is a national average and can vary enormously depending on the amount of rear or side access. If burglars can be stopped from reaching these points an actual attack on the house itself will have been prevented.

Ideally a 2 metre (6'6") fence or wall around the back garden ought to keep the house secure. Unfortunately, most burglars are quite athletic and such a barrier can be scaled quite easily. If the fence or wall is topped with 30 to 45 cms (12-18") of open-ended or other similarly weak trellising, i.e. strong enough to support climbing plants but too weak to support the weight of a human, the prospective burglar will be unable to climb it without a risk of being seen and physically breaking the trellising. The noise of this alone and the risk of injury is a deterrent in itself. The fence or wall should not provide any footholds or other climbing aids. Be aware that if the addition of a trellis takes the height of the fence above 2 metres, you may require planning permission.

Garden gates need to be the same height as the fence or wall and fitted with heavy-duty hinges. Security should be provided with at least one padbolt secured with a padlock on the garden side of the gate. If the adjacent fence is topped with trellis, seriously consider extending it over the gate.

Perimeter security can be further enhanced by the supplementary planting of 'unfriendly' shrubs or trees. The following plants have thorny stems or spiny leaves, nature's own 'barbed wire' and, in many cases, with the bonus of attractive flowers or berries:

Climbers

Pyracantha (Firethorn)
Rosa (Climbing rose)
Rubus (Bramble)
Smilax



Hedges

Berberis (Barberry) Crataegus (Hawthorn)
Maclura Pyracantha (Firethorn)
Rosa (Shrub rose) Rhamnus (Common buckthorn)
Ulex (Gorse) Ribes speciosum (Flowering currant)



Mahonia

Shrubs & Trees

Aralia (Angelica tree)
 Chaenomeles (Quince)
 Colletia
 Ilex (Holly)
 Mahonia
 Osmanthus
 Poncirus
 Rosa (Shrub rose)

Elaeagnus angustifolia/pungens (Oleaster)
 Hippophae rhamnoides (Sea buckthorn)
 Juniperus - 'Wiltonii'/'Old Gold' (Juniper)
 Oplonanax horridus (Devil's club)
 Prunus spinosa (Blackthorn)
 Ruscus aculaetus (Butcher's broom)
 Zanthoxylum (Japan pepper)
 Zizyphus (Chinese jujube)



Holly

Some of the shrubs and trees listed can also double as hedges if appropriately pruned/trained. Although they will take some time to grow, the end result will justify the effort - they should deter even the most determined burglar. Larger, more mature specimens can be obtained through specialist nurseries. The greater expense will be offset by the more evident instant effectiveness.

Hedges, shrubs and walls in the front garden should be no higher than 3' in order to avoid giving a burglar a screen behind which he can conceal himself. For the same reason, trees should be cut back to at least 6' from ground level. Using gravel on paths or driveways prevents a silent approach and can alert the occupier to somebody's presence.

If you are considering erecting barbed wire or other such fence topping, it must comply with Section 164 of the Highways Act 1980. The general rule to be applied is to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to prevent injury. It must not overhang and must incline inwards. In broad terms, its use cannot be recommended purely for the purpose of providing perimeter security and it should never be used as a means of entrapment. The injuries it can cause and the potential ensuing litigation far outweigh any benefits it might otherwise provide. Nature provides its own defence systems, as listed above, and these are far preferable. In relation to this, you also need to bear in mind the Occupiers' Liability Acts of 1957 & 1984, which set out the duty of care you owe to your visitors (1957), i.e. people you invite or permit to use your land, whether expressly or by implication, e.g. the postman, or to people you have not invited or permitted to be on your land (1984), such as trespassers, to whom it is considered a duty of care is still owed.

Don't make a burglar's life any easier by leaving gardening tools available to act as the perfect implement to force an entry. Always lock them away securely after use and consider chaining them together with a padlock attached to a hasp and staple. Likewise, don't leave ladders to provide easy access to otherwise inaccessible parts of your house. They should be chained and padlocked to a strong post or wall.

The comparatively recent rise in thefts from gardens and sheds and the growth in car boot sales is no coincidence. For this reason, we need to protect the property in which thieves see value. Costly garden furniture and valuable ornaments, such as statues or stone planters, can be protected by securing them to the ground and proprietary ground anchors are specifically designed for this purpose - even valuable plants can be treated in the same way. Hanging baskets are certainly worth protecting as they are frequently targeted; bending the basket bracket and/or hook on the chain to prevent its removal may be a sufficient deterrent, though secure or locking brackets are available for this purpose through retail outlets.

Always property mark your gardening equipment and valuables with your postcode and house number (see the section on Property Marking at the end of this report). In most cases engraving will be the most suitable method. For more valuable items microchips may be worth considering.

GARDEN SHED

Garden sheds are a very popular target with burglars and are often overlooked when security is being considered. The value of the contents, such as garden mowers, strimmers cycles etc. can often add up to many hundreds of pounds. It is therefore wise to secure the shed door with at least one heavy-duty hasp and closed-shackle padlock.

It may not always be appropriate to fit a heavy-duty padlock, hasp and staple, as the shed door and frame may not be strong enough to support them. There is a range of smaller but sturdy padlocks, padbolts, hasps and staples that would be suitable. Whether fitting heavy-duty devices or otherwise, always use coach-bolt fixings through the door and frame.

The door itself should be hung on strong hinges that are secured with coach bolts or clutch-head screws, as ordinary fixings can be easily unscrewed. All opening windows require good window locks. If you never open them, consider screwing them permanently shut from the inside.

As most sheds are inherently weak, it is worth considering installing an internal wire mesh lining. This would provide an additional barrier should a panel be breached.

In addition to fitting external physical security to your shed, it is worth considering the installation of an alarm. This does not mean a complete burglar alarm system, though, if your house already has such an installation, it may be possible for it to be extended to the shed. There are various stand-alone devices on the market specifically designed for remote use in garages or sheds, which fall into two main categories:

- a passive infra-red detector within the shed to detect movement and body heat
- a door contact system

Both systems will operate a sounder if the shed is accessed without the correct de-activation. They are available with battery or mains power supply and can be purchased from your local locksmiths, DIY or discount store.

The major problem with vulnerable garden sheds is that they provide burglars with an arsenal of house breaking implements, e.g. the versatile garden spade: because of the blade size and the leverage that can be exerted, few door or window locks can withstand a prolonged attack from this implement. If the shed is too fragile to secure adequately, the spade should either be bolted or padlocked to a heavy bench or frame, or, better still, kept in a more secure place such as a locked garage. Alternatively, your tools can be secured by chaining them together.

Consider the use of a strong lockable box or cage within the shed in which you can store not only your garden tools but also insecticides, weed killers or other items that may be harmful to health or plants if improperly used.

GARAGE

Garages are frequently used for storing not only cars, motor bikes and cycles, but also property similar to those found in garden sheds, as well as DIY power tools and sporting equipment. Considering the value of their contents, security precautions are often found to be wanting, and for this reason they are identified by burglars as easy targets.

If you have a burglar alarm system, why not extend it to the garage? Alternatively, there are various alarm devices on the market specifically designed for remote use in garages or sheds, which fall into two main categories:

- a passive infra-red detector within the shed to detect movement and body heat
- a door contact system

Both systems will operate a sounder if the garage is accessed without the correct de-activation. They are available with battery or mains power supply and can be purchased from your local locksmiths, DIY or discount store.

An unsecured ladder could be used by a burglar to access an otherwise inaccessible part of the home. When not in use they should always be chained and padlocked to a strong post or a garage wall.

WOODEN DOUBLE LEAF DOORS

It would be preferable to secure the doors with a heavy-duty hasp and staple, coach bolted through the doors, together with a closed shackle padlock.

UP AND OVER DOORS

It is probably best not to rely solely on the centre lock provided. If the door is the only means of entry to the garage, it should be fitted with a hasp and staple, together with a padlock as above. There are also mortice locks specially designed for garage doors that engage into the side frame. They should be fitted between 30-45 cms (12-18") from the ground on both left and right sides of the door to prevent the corners being lifted. Before fitting, take note of the gap between the door and the frame, as some of the bolts have only a short throw. Locks with a double-throw will provide better security against forcing. A particular advantage of garage mortice locks is that they can be modified to use the same key for convenience as the front door.

If there is another exit/entrance, and the door opens along runners, consider drilling through one of the runners just behind the wheel in the closed position, inserting a long bolt to stop the wheel moving along the runners. If the door operates on a hinged bar and not runners, drill through the side metal frame and pass a padlock through this hole and around the hinged bar to stop the door lifting.

EXIT / ENTRANCE DOORS

Pedestrian access doors, if opening inwards, should be fitted with a 5-lever mortice (deadlock), and, if opening outwards, should additionally be fitted with hinge bolts to protect the exposed hinges. If the door is not thick enough to take a mortice lock, it should be fitted with a heavy-duty hasp and staple, coach-bolted through the door, together with a closed shackle padlock.

Internal doors connecting the garage with the dwelling require a similar level of security as for front doors in order to resist an undisturbed attack by a burglar.

LIGHTING ~ EXTERIOR

A useful addition to perimeter security can be exterior lighting, which should be automatically operated. Lighting does have its limitations - burglaries often take place during daylight hours. Lighting should be seen as an aid, but on its own it is not sufficient to deter a burglar.

Fit lights that are operated by photo-electric cells. These turn the lights on at dusk and off at dawn automatically. If coupled with the use of long-life energy-saving compact fluorescent lamps, they offer a much less obtrusive light and, although on all night, can be cheaper to run than passive infra-red halogen lamps. They provide an area of vision throughout the hours of darkness through which a burglar or thief must pass to reach the house. Coupled with the use of an interior security lighting scheme, exterior lighting can be a very effective deterrent. However, you must make sure that your light does not intrude into your neighbours' windows. Exterior lights can be DIY fitted, but if you are not sure, you should contact a qualified electrical contractor.

LIGHTING ~ INTERIOR

Next time you are out walking after dark, see if you can spot which are the homes where no one is in. It can be guaranteed that the most obvious clue will be the absence of internal lights. The wise precaution of leaving lights on while the occupants are out can substantially help to give the impression to a passer-by that someone is at home. As a minimum it is sensible to use a downstairs room with a drawn curtain and sufficient light inside to suggest that the room is occupied. A light should not be left on solely in the hall - a thief may guess that the premises are unoccupied, as it is not normal for the occupants to spend all night only in the hall!

Far more effective, however, is the use of automatic devices and there are many available - simple and sophisticated - which will turn lights on and off in a random or programmable fashion, or which are activated by sound. Set timers to control other electrical appliances such as a radio tuned to a talk station - for safety reasons a television is not recommended for this purpose. Devices to draw curtains automatically are also available. Automatic switching will help to convince the opportunist thief that the house is occupied.

For the majority of cases security lighting will have the desired effect of deterring a potential intruder. But do remember, lighting alone cannot work miracles. It is sensible to make sure that your physical defences - the locks, bars and bolts - will resist attack. Let your neighbours know that you are out, and if you are a member of your Neighbourhood Watch scheme so much the better.

LETTERBOX

Letterboxes/plates should be considered as apertures through which a criminal can either extract goods from the vicinity of the door, typically door or car keys, or to access the door locks from the inside. Unforced burglaries and thefts of vehicles are frequently caused simply because the keys have been left too close to the front door.

Letter plates should conform to the Post Office recommendation 250 mm x 38 mm (British Standard 2911). They should be positioned no closer than 400 mm from the door lock but should not be fitted to the bottom rail of the door. An internal cover plate offers additional security, as does a letter basket, though you might wish to consider removing the bottom, allowing the mail to fall to the floor and thus preventing theft of the mail.

COMMUNAL DOOR SECURITY

When evaluating communal entry security, Fire Regulations must take precedence over all other considerations. If in any doubt, consult your local Fire Officer on as well as the Safer Neighbourhood Team .

CONSTRUCTION OF DOORS & FRAMES

Wooden doors and frames should be of solid hardwood or solid core construction. The door must be to a minimum thickness of 44 mm and the frame should have a rebate of not less than 18 mm. Three good quality 100 mm hinges and two hinge bolts should support the hinge side. To achieve additional frame strength, consider using steel reinforcing or London/Birmingham bars.

Glazed or glass panelled doors should be of a minimum 6.4 mm laminated glass or equivalent strength polycarbonate sheet, with consideration given to utilising internal grilles as additional protection, especially where lock releases could be accessed through a broken pane. Before installing polycarbonate sheets you must seek a fire officer's consent. Glazed doors that have no frame, even if constructed with toughened or safety glass, offer little resistance to attack and cannot easily be reinforced.

It should not be possible to gain access to locks or security fittings via letter boxes. Their siting into walls sufficiently far from doors or windows should be encouraged. However, if they are fitted to the door, the recommendation is to install a basket or protective plate to prevent the unauthorised operation of the locking devices. In either case, the plate must be sited at least 400 mm from the locks.

LOCKING DEVICES

Doors Without Electronic Access Control

Ideally the door should be fitted with a lock that has an automatic deadlocking facility, approximately a third of the way down from the top of the door. Additionally, a mortice deadlock latch should be installed a third of the way up from the bottom of the door, avoiding any construction joints, and it should be used as often as is practicable. These locks must be suitable for emergency exit purposes, in that they must not require key release from within, opening being achieved by means of a handle or thumb turn. Where there is any conflict between security and fire requirements or legislation, the latter must prevail. In any case of doubt, seek the Fire Officer's approval.

All doors must be fitted with an automatic closing mechanism, both properly adjusted and regularly maintained, to ensure that the door is secured at all times. Doors should never be left wedged open, as this not only negates any security within the building, but may also contravene any Fire Regulations.

Doors With Electronic Access Control

The remote release lock should be of a type that has an electrically operated bolt action with an automatic deadlocking facility, or is a magnetic type lock. It is imperative that the system has a safeguard incorporated, which ensures that the lock can be released in the event of a power failure.

ACCESS CONTROL SYSTEMS

It is preferable that at least one of the following security measures applies:

- the door is secured at all times and visitors are permitted entry via a remote release facility which is linked to an audio visual or audio only entry-phone.
- the door is secured at all times and visitors are met personally at the door.
- the communal entrance is constantly monitored by a receptionist or concierge.

ADDITIONAL BURGLARY PREVENTION ADVICE

Burglary victims often wonder why the burglar picked on their house. To find out you need to consider:

“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 that is properly secured:

- side gates and accessible windows open
- ladders left out, allowing access to otherwise inaccessible windows
- garden tools available to force entry
- untrimmed hedges or high fences in front gardens providing cover and preventing natural surveillance
- scaleable drain pipes adjacent to upper windows - protect with anti-climb paint

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. **The question is, are the occupants in?**

- milk bottles or parcels on the doorstep
- newspapers and mail protruding through the letter box or visible through glazed front doors

- unlit houses after dark and closed curtains during the day
- all windows shut in very hot weather

These signs tell 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. **Holiday times**, when the house is unoccupied for long periods, are particularly important. If we can take measures that tell the burglar that this building is too risky a target, he will hopefully move on. **Make it look as though your house is occupied and don't advertise your absence.**

- install automated/programmable light switches, use timers which switch lamps or radios on and off automatically and consider fitting motorised curtain rails
- have a neighbour or friend pop round to clear your letterbox or doorstep regularly and keep the garden tidy
- encourage a neighbour to park on your drive
- **don't** advertise that you are going away - **do** cancel all regular deliveries, but **don't** announce your departure to a shop-full of people, **don't** discuss your holiday plans with or within earshot of strangers, **don't** have your home address showing on your luggage for the outward journey and if you are using a taxi service to the airport, etc., **do** arrange for the pickup to be away from your home
- consider arranging for a house-sitter.

The final tip involves your house and car keys. For convenience, so many of us leave our keys in close proximity to the front door. If they're close to the front door it means they're also close to the letterbox. The method of using a stick or similar device to 'hook' the keys through the letterbox, predominantly at night, is becoming an increasing problem. Not only can your home then be entered with ease, but your car taken as well, all without any force being applied or disturbance being caused. Never leave your keys within the vicinity of the front door and preferably keep them secreted elsewhere in the home.

Remember: Remove the Opportunity - Prevent the Crime

BOGUS CALLERS

Not all burglars break into homes - some will try to trick or con their way in. They are known as bogus callers and will pretend to be on official business from legitimate concerns such as the Utility Companies - Gas, Electricity and Water - or the local council. They may claim to be tradesmen or workmen calling to carry out urgent repairs. They may even claim to be police officers!

Bogus callers succeed because they sound believable, so don't be fooled. Make certain in your own mind that they are whom they claim to be by following these simple steps:

- Before you open the door, engage your chain and look through your spy hole or adjacent window to see if you recognise the caller. Remember - while your door is closed you are in control.
- Ask callers for proof of identity. Genuine tradesmen should carry an identification card, preferably displaying their photograph. Check this carefully. If you are in any way unsure, telephone the company the caller claims to represent, obtaining the number from the telephone directory or directory enquiries - a number offered by the caller should not be relied upon.
- Be particularly wary of callers claiming to be from the waterboard needing to 'check your pipes' - this is something the water utilities never do.
- The Utility Companies now offer a password identification system. Any caller from one of these companies should be able to give a pre-arranged password as additional proof of identity. You will find it helpful to keep a list of their telephone numbers near your phone. If you would like more information on this scheme, please contact the relevant Utility. Alternatively, keep a note of your customer reference number for each utility, so that when a representative calls, they should be able to quote the number before you give them access to your home.
- Beware of callers who attempt to distract you by claiming that they have seen something untoward in your rear garden or somewhere that may encourage you to leave your house - they may have an accomplice awaiting this distraction.
- If you are not satisfied as to the identity of the caller, don't let them in. Ask the caller to come back later and arrange for a friend, relative or neighbour to be present on their return. Alternatively, ask the caller to contact this person.

Treat every stranger with caution. If you are still worried, dial 999 immediately and ask for the police.

Remember: If in doubt, Keep Them Out!

FIRE SAFETY

Improving the security of your home need not mean that escape in the event of a fire will prove more difficult. Planning ahead is the key.

Early warning of a fire is essential. Probably the most effective safeguard is the fitting of smoke alarms. By detecting smoke before you do, particularly when the occupants of the house are asleep, the alarm's activation will provide those invaluable extra minutes that will enable you and your family to make your escape more safely.

They should meet British Standard 5446 Part 1 and be fitted in accordance with the instructions provided. At least one detector should be installed on every level of the house or flat, fixed horizontally on the ceiling rather than vertically on a wall. Avoid fitting them in or adjacent to kitchens, as they are likely to be falsely activated by cooking emissions. Follow the instructions provided with regard to cleaning the detectors and changing the batteries. The London Fire Brigade are currently running the fire safety campaign, **Be Safe & Sound**, in which they are carrying out free home fire safety checks. To arrange a visit, call free on **08000 28 44 28**

For those with hearing impairments who would not be alerted by a conventional smoke alarm, devices such as a vibrating pad or flashing light are available - the former is particularly effective for deaf-blind people.

The issue of security in the home while the occupants are asleep is not as straightforward as it might seem - to lock or not to lock. The principle is that your security measures should not unduly hinder your escape in the event of a fire. Whilst it is preferable to engage the mortice locks on front and back doors, it is important to consider the implications both for escape in the event of a fire and rescue by the Fire Brigade or other emergency services. If access to the front or back door or its key is concealed by smoke, escape is likely to be delayed. As an alternative to engaging the mortice, consider fitting a strong draw bolt to the bottom of the door, i.e. within reach of smaller members of the household. This will enable a speedier escape in an emergency, as well as maintaining security for the occupants whilst in the premises. However, if you have household insurance cover, examine your policy to see if there are any stipulations regarding security of the premises whilst occupied. Ultimately, the best advice is:

- Key-lock or bolt all external doors at night – including uPVC replacement doors

and

- follow the Fire Brigade's advice - keep the house keys at your bedside at night and somewhere near the front door during the day, **but not on show.**

In the case of **flats or apartments** where the front door is 4.5 metres (15') above ground level, i.e. the second floor or above, the installation of security devices is, to an extent, governed by fire regulations and the advice on security is based on that provided by British Standard 5588. That is to say, standard mortice locks should not be fitted on doors used as the primary means of escape if they can be locked from the inside with a key. The locking device should have a single action release, i.e. opened with a lever, handle or thumb turn.

As previously mentioned, planning is the key. Identify alternative escape routes in the event of a fire or other emergency and ensure that these are known to other members of the household.

For further information on fire safety and prevention, contact your fire safety officer on or local council.

GLAZING

All crime prevention advice is based on the deterrent and delaying value of the various security devices that can be installed. Locks on doors and windows certainly provide the main thrust of the advice, but in themselves they are only part of a complete security package.

All single-glazed areas on both the ground floor and other accessible areas can be vulnerable to attack - after all, plain glass is easily breakable. Consider replacing ordinary or toughened glass with laminated glass, two pieces of glass bonded together with a sheet of laminate (PVB), preferably to a minimum thickness of 6.4 mm. This is far more difficult to break through as it will not shatter and will therefore delay any attempt at forced entry, in itself a valuable deterrent. Please note that this thickness is the minimum standard for accident resistant safety glazing (BS 6206/6262), which, though not a security glass, will offer some security protection. The standard for laminated security glass is defined as being of 7.5 mm thickness or greater (BS 5544).

You can place a plastic glazing film over the glazed area to prevent the glass from shattering, though the clarity of the glass will be a reduced. However, this should be considered only for safety purposes, not security.

When replacing glass in wooden windows use a glazing mastic to bond it to the frame, as it is far tougher than putty.

Leaded windows are particularly susceptible in that they offer little resistance to attack. Lead is a soft material with poor tensile strength. To protect them you can install secondary glazing, or alternatively fit metal grilles or bars. Such measures can detract from the overall look of your windows, but it is important to be aware of their vulnerability.

PROPERTY MARKING

It is an appropriate time to remind you about marking your property. Acting on the advice as laid out in this report should minimise the possibility of a break-in. However, in the unlikely event of a burglary, you would be reassured in the knowledge that your property, valuable or otherwise, is marked and thus identifiable. Being able to provide

proof that an item of property is yours greatly improves the chance of it being returned to you at some stage. Without such proof you may never be able to claim it as yours.

Thieves like portable, high value, easily saleable goods like televisions, videos, hi-fi, home computers, cameras, jewellery, silverware and antiques. You can mark these items with your postcode followed by the number of your house or flat. You can get inexpensive kits to do this from DIY stores and stationers. You can also permanently etch items with a special etching or electric engraving tool, thus making a visible identification mark, particularly disliked by burglars. This is preferable to ultra-violet or 'invisible' markings that can fade or be removed. You may want to share the cost with neighbours and friends. There are higher-tech methods of property marking too, well worth considering for the more valuable items: indelible ultra-violet and ink dyes, microdots and microchips. For further information, contact your local Safer Neighbourhood Team .

If you have valuables that you can't or don't want to mark, such as jewellery, ornaments or paintings, take colour photographs of them, including hallmarks and other identifying marks, together with a coin or ruler to indicate the actual size. Macro (close-up) photography is effective in keeping identifiable records of apparently unidentifiable items such as stamps or coins. These detailed images can highlight the unique perforations or striations otherwise undetectable to the naked eye.

Some tips for taking photos of property include:

- take photos only of items you will be able to identify as yours, as well as items which might become the subject of any future insurance claim
- take detailed photos of any rare or unusual items
 - place a ruler beside the item to show its size
 - avoid reflections from shiny surfaces when taking the photos with a flash
 - use a plain background rather than patterned wallpaper or carpet
 - if it has unique markings, take a close-up of them, including damage or repair marks

If using a film camera, you may be asked for your name and address when taking your film to be developed. If you feel nervous about the shop knowing where you live and what property you have, you don't need to give your address. Whether using a film or digital camera, it is important to remember to keep the negatives or images separate from the prints, not to keep them in anything that might be stolen and, ideally, away from the home.

Keep a list, too, of the serial numbers of your various items of electrical equipment. The numbers will be useful, as will photographs, if you need to make an insurance claim. The police can let you have a sticker for your window saying your possessions are marked. Hopefully this will deter burglars.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

What is Neighbourhood Watch?

Neighbourhood Watch is all about it is looking out for each other. Neighbours uniting and acting together means that dozens of eyes and ears are ready to pick upon anything happening in the neighbourhood that could cause worry or concern. It's not about being nosy or interfering, it's about being a good neighbour and caring about your community.

Neighbourhood Watch can do more than protecting homes and property against burglary. By working together, neighbours can help reduce all sorts of local crimes. They can take action to improve the environment by getting something done about things like vandalism, graffiti, poor lighting and a lack of local amenities. Neighbourhood Watch is also about bringing people closer together and involving them in local life. A stronger community spirit grows as people get to know one another and look out for each other.

Anyone can join a Neighbourhood Watch team and everyone can play a part in its achievements. Any community or neighbourhood - however large or small - can set up a scheme. A scheme can be made up of just a few houses in a street, or a few households, the residents in a square, or a whole estate. Each scheme can be different - you don't even have to use the title 'Neighbourhood Watch' or put a sticker in your window.

Neighbourhood Watch means no one is alone. Your neighbours will look out for you, your family, your home and your street or estate, and you will do the same for them. Neighbourhood Watch schemes also help the community to look out for people in the neighbourhood who are more vulnerable. Children and young people, the elderly and the frail, and people who have had their homes broken into before can all benefit from having an extra eye kept on them.

As well as receiving the support from other scheme members, people belonging to Neighbourhood Watch can make contact with other local Watch groups. And the police, local councils and other community and voluntary organisations all support Neighbourhood Watch.

Neighbourhood Watch works by:

- bringing people closer together
- building a stronger community spirit
- helping to reduce crime
- lessening people's anxieties about crime
- strengthening links with the police
- developing closer relationships with local councils
- improving the local environment
- creating a better quality of life

For more information on joining or starting a Neighbourhood Watch in your area contact the Community Contact Officer at your local police station on .

CRIMESTOPPERS

If you have any information about a burglar or burglary, or indeed any other crime, please buzz the Crimestoppers number below. It's free and it's open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

You don't have to leave your name and you could receive a cash reward. All we're interested in is your information.

In an emergency always dial 999

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Are you satisfied with the security of your home? Remember, many security measures are inexpensive and some cost nothing at all. An improvement in your security will give you greater peace of mind and reduce the chances of a burglary. If, after reading this report, you feel that you need further information on home security, contact the Safer Neighbourhood Team who will be more than happy to advise or visit you.

Ring: ☎ ☎

In the meantime, I hope you find this information useful.

Don't delay, act now! Together we'll crack it!

PS. Remember, if you see anybody acting suspiciously - call the Police, dial 999.

Crime Prevention advice is given free without the intention of creating a contract. Neither the Home Office nor the Metropolitan Police Service take any other legal responsibilities for advice given.