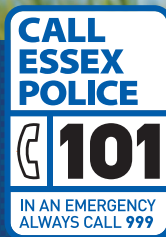


KEEPING YOUR **HOME** IN SAFE HANDS

GUIDANCE NOTES



**ESSEX
POLICE**
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1 Introduction

Security is a very important issue in reducing the opportunity for crime.

Domestic burglaries usually take place during the daytime, when the offender can reasonably expect the house to be empty.

Home Office research has shown that, after suffering a crime such as burglary, the likelihood of being targeted again increases.

These pages have been designed to introduce some practical steps to safeguard your home.

Common-sense crime prevention measures will reduce your risk of becoming a victim of crime.

The guide draws upon advice and material from:-

Home Office Crime Reduction Website

Essex Police – Crime Reduction

BBC Crime Watch Website

Master Locksmith Association products

Disclaimer

Crime prevention advice is given freely without the intention of creating a contract. Neither do the Home Officer no Essex Police take any legal responsibility for the advice given.

In these guidance notes on security there are examples of various security items which are on the market for your information and perusal. Essex Police does not endorse any commercial provider of products

2. Boundary

When considering physical security the first place to start is the perimeter protection. This could be a physical barrier such as a fence or wall marking the boundary of your property creating an environment where it is difficult for a criminal to operate, and effectively designing out the opportunity to commit crime. This is your first line of defence.

i. **Garden Fence** – ensure you check fences and gates regularly and repair holes. Rear perimeter, fencing should be a minimum of 1.8m which provides best boundary security. If existing panels are lower you can fix trellis to the top of the

panels. Most local council planning regulations only permit a residential fence to a maximum height of 1.8m check with your local council. Front perimeter, boundary fencing should be no more than 1m (3ft 3in) in height to maximise good visibility.

ii. **Defensive Planting** – you can take added measures to protect weak spots and gaps in your boundary by planting thorny, self-protecting shrubs and bushes on the inside of your boundary. Thorny shrubs planted beneath vulnerable windows will also deter or hinder a burglar. Defensive planting is very effective.

Examples: Blackthorn, a dense, deciduous, very spiny shrub, with would deter most intruders. This has masses of slightly scented small white flowers in the spring, followed by glaucous black fruits in the autumn through to winter. Will grow if required to 5m or trim to the desired height required. – grows at approximately 15cms per year. Another example – Berberis Thunbergii – a dense prickly deciduous shrub which produces small yellow flowers in spring followed by bright red berries. Also has attractive autumn foliage. Grows to 1.5m in height, in full sun or partial shade excellent for a low growing hedge. Grows at approximately 20cms per year.

iii. **Side Entrance** – install a quality gate of the same standard as your fencing and ensure that it is lockable and flush to the building line; height of the gate should match that of the rear boundary/perimeter fence.

iv. **Security Lighting** – Security lights can put off a thief. Security lighting for domestic properties can be inexpensive and effective such as low-level dusk to dawn outdoor security. Ensure that the lights are located out of reach to prevent tampering.

v. **Sheds** – Timber sheds - in order to fit good hasp and staple bar – strengthen the doors by fixing wooden batons to the inside and use a close shackle padlock. When using screws use security screws (non-return screws) as they are designed so they cannot be unscrewed – strengthen hinges. Make sure the door is solid enough not to be kicked in. Windows should be screened and fitted with a lock or even sealed.

As extra security fit ground anchors which can be used to chain or shackle bikes and mowers securely. Always chain together more expensive items such as cycles, lawn mowers and ladders, again using a closed shackle padlock and good quality chain.

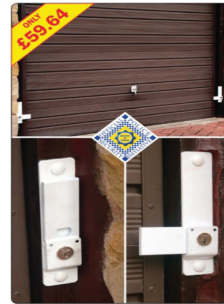
Store your strimmers; electrical tools etc. in a lockable steel cabinet fitted to the floor to store your tools

vi. **Green house** – do not leave tools in your greenhouse.

vii. **Garage** – Integral garages with pedestrian access door leading to the house should meet the same physical standards, locking and fixings as external back doors.

Extra security for up and over garage doors

1. A door defender lock which is a heavy duty metal arm padlocked to base plate that is bolted into concrete outside the garage door.
2. High-security locks for up and over garage doors – lockable (key operated placed at the bottom either side of the door) (example below)



3. Building

- i. **Doors** – all external facing doors – door frames should be made of strong solid wood or metal. Doors should be solid and at least 44mm thick. The door should be securely fixed to its frame by three sets of equally space hinges. A five lever mortice deadlock should be used on external doors, including French doors.
- ii. **Front door** – a rim latch/5 lever mortice lock or automatic dead-locking latch bolt. Also as an added measure fit a five-lever mortice deadlock about a third of the way up the door. For strength and quality look for BS 3621 kite marked products. Supplement with key operated security bolts; one into the head and one down into the threshold of the frame. Also fit a door chain or bar limiter.
- iii. **Glazed panels** – in and adjacent to external doors the panels should be laminated glass to a minimum of 6.4mm thick and securely fixed.
- iv. **Letter boxes** – consider fitting a letterbox cage or other restrictor, which prevents thieves from putting their hands through the letterbox and trying the latches from the inside.
- v. **Chains & door viewers** – use them every time someone calls. You only use the door chain or bar when answering the door – DO NOT LEAVE IT ON ALL THE TIME.
- vi. **Side and Rear doors** – fit five lever mortice dead locks and supplement it with key operated security bolts; top and bottom of the frames as in (ii)
- vii. **Patio door** – it is advisable to fit an extra patio door lock to both top and bottom of the sliding door to increase protection against a forced attack. If the door can be raised from its runner, also fit an anti-lift device which will prevent the door being lifted easily once in a locked position. If replacing patio doors, ask the system supplier for their high-security specification.
- viii. **French doors** – should meet the same physical and fitting standards as side and rear doors. Fit a 5 lever mortice lock and supplement them with key operated security bolts to both doors top and bottom.
- ix. **Hinges** – Check that the door hinges are sturdy and secured with strong, long screws. For added security fit hinge bolts. These are inexpensive and help reinforce the hinge side of a door against the use of force.
- x. **Windows** – All ground floor windows and those easily accessible above ground floor level should be fitted with key operated window locks, home security and

DIY shops sell key operated locks to fit most kinds of windows. You may need more than one window lock depending on the size of the opening. Even small windows such as skylights or bathroom fanlights need locks. Louver windows are especially vulnerable because thieves can easily take the slats out of the frame. These should be secured and individually glue the slats in place, and fit a special louver lock. For added protection install externally fitted bars or mesh grilles. Better still, replace them with fixed glass. Before leaving your home ensure windows are closed and securely locked (even in the warm summer months although it is tempting to leave small windows open so as to allow fresh air in). If you are replacing windows take the opportunity to install new ones that are certified to British Standard BS 7950 'Windows of Enhanced Security'. Use laminated glass, particularly in ground floor and accessible windows.

One in five burglaries happens because we forget to shut windows and doors when going out. Remember remove the keys from locked windows and keep them in a safe place.

Before fitting locks to PVC-u windows, talk to the installer to make sure this will not affect your warranty.

xi. **Timers** – installing timers on your lights and radios is a good way of creating the appearance that the property is occupied.

xii. **Keys** Don't keep keys, including window keys in or adjacent to their locks. Keep them out of sight and safe. Install a key safe. Never leave a spare key in a convenient hiding place such as under the door mat, flower pot etc; thieves know all the usual hiding places. If you have moved or moving house consider changing the locks in particular the rear and front doors – other people may still have keys that fit the current locks. Use a local locksmith who is a member of the Master Locksmith's or British Locksmith's, associations.

xiii. **Post Coding** Marking electrical goods can help in the event of trying to trace the rightful owners of stolen items. Also postcode garden tools, strimmers, lawnmowers, bikes etc.

xiv. **Jewellery** A floorboard safe, or small safe, which is bolted into the fabric of the building is a good way of securing valuables. Make a note of all your jewellery and valuable items such as porcelain etc and take photographs. Store this information in a safe secure place. If you ever loose items of jewellery on holiday or out of the house or a victim of burglary it is easier to prove ownership to the Insurance Company. Make note of the date and the items on the back of the photograph.

xv. **Bank Statements/domestic bills/passports** don't leave bank or credit card statements lying around. Also be aware that domestic bills and important documents such as passports may also be targets for an intruder. Again put them away in a safe or lockable filing cabinet so that they are not easily found. Ensure you shred or finely tear up your paperwork relating to bank, credit card and address details.

xvi. **Going on holiday** Cancel any milk and or newspaper deliveries; cut the lawn before you go. Do not put your home address on luggage labels when travelling to your destination. Ask a family member, a good neighbour or friend to look after your home while you are away. Ask that they collect your post on a regular basis. If possible to draw your curtains of a night and open them in the mornings.

4 Intruder alarm

Alarms can be installed to support the physical security of the property. There are various types of alarms available on the market – wire or wireless systems catering for all circumstances. You can either have an audible only (bells) or monitored by an Alarm Receiving Centre. A professionally installed security system can help to reduce your insurance premiums, as well as deter the burglar. Seek expert advice from reputable companies, look for approved installers in the area who are members of a recognised alarm inspectorate: NSI and SSAIB as they install to British Standards (BS4737). These companies provide:

- Thorough survey of your home
- Good quality reliable up-to-date equipment that meet the relevant European Standards.
- Qualified installation personnel
- All installation to BS 4737
- Professional servicing/maintenance as required
- To meet the local Police requirements
- Explain to you fully and clearly how the system works

Our advice when purchasing an alarm system or security device is as follows: Always obtain written quotations from at least three bone-fide alarm companies. This will give you the opportunity to compare costs. Always check with your insurance company as to their requirement prior to selecting your alarm installer.

Turn away any company that tries to shock you into purchasing with stories of burglaries in your locality.

i. **Audible alarms** – sound a loud siren bell, scaring the intruder and alerting neighbours and passers by. This alarm does not get an automatic police response. For the police to respond some additional information from a person at the scene to confirm that a criminal offence is in progress would have to be given.

ii. **Remote Signalling/Monitored** – alarms send a signal to a commercial “Alarm Receiving Centre” who alerts a keyholder and, if required the police. There will be an additional cost for this service, also, for police response, the system has to be installed, monitored and maintained in accordance with the ACPO Policy on Police

Response. If the alarm is set off the monitoring company will check whether any alarm is false, such as being set off by the homeowners entering the wrong access code accidentally or forgetting to switch it off.

iii. **Movement detectors** – the most common form of movement detector is a passive infra-red, but ultrasonic and microwave detectors are also used.

The devices are normally mounted in the corner of a room and tuned to detect movement.

iv. **Vibration detector & door contact** – The vibration detectors are placed strategically on the window frames and are designed to detect any forced entry, glass being broken, window frames being prised open. The contacts are placed on all exterior doors of the premises and are designed to detect the door being opened.

For reasons of identification and convenience the protected premises are split into 'zones' which are individually controlled by the control unit. Only one sensor (detector) should be fitted to each zone.

Alarm Box (audible). The alarm will provide mechanical and weather protection for the warning device inside. The alarm should be protected against unauthorised tampering or attack.

If you live in a remote area it is advisable to be linked to a monitoring station.

5 Property marking and mobile phones

Crime Prevention advice is as above (4 xii) when post coding your electrical items with a UV pen, also post code your mobile telephone somewhere inside the case.

You should take note of the IMEI number in case it gets lost or stolen. The IMEI number is unique to each phone and is displayed by pressing * # 0 6 #. If the phone is ever stolen, this number can be used by the service provider to block it across all networks, making it useless to any thief.

You can record the IMEI number and all of your details for free at www.immobilise.com. If your phone is stolen, you can get all the details from this site with your own login, so that you can give them to the operator. If the police find your phone, they can use this information to prove that the phone is stolen and return it to you.

6 Theft from Vehicles

Always ensure you do not leave any valuables in your vehicle including Sat Navigation systems and holder. Securely lock and alarm it.

You should even be careful about locking shopping in the boot. Thieves often hang

around busy car parks waiting for an opportunity, so someone could have been watching you do this. If they know that it is worth their while to break in, they will, and most boots can easily be accessed from the interior of the car.

If you do leave your car unattended, try to choose a secure car park where closed circuit television cameras are in operation. The thief doesn't want to be caught on camera.

Park near to the entrance, where people are constantly passing on foot. Suspicious activity may go unnoticed at the rear of a car park or behind walls or shrubs. And try to complete your shopping in daylight hours or park in well-lit areas.

7 Pedal cycle security

Take a photograph of the cycle and have it post coded, on the reverse of the photo make a note of the serial number and post code.

Do not leave your cycle lying in the front or rear gardens of your property. Always put the cycle away in either a shed or garage. Use a good 'D' lock (Sold Secure products) and secure it to other items in the shed or garage such as step ladders, lawn mower as an example. Always ensure that the garage / shed doors are securely locked.

When out cycling, always take suitable security lock and chain. Ensure your secure your cycle to something solid, i.e. a lamp post. Always look for a secure area to park your cycle, an official bike stand, and CCTV coverage. Secure your cycle by placing the locking mechanism around the frame of the bike.

Never leave your cycle unattended and insecure, even if you are popping into a shop for just a minute. Again the same applies when you are at home.

8 Chip and pin security of your debit and credit cards

Do not carry your security pin number with your card or in your handbag/wallet. Whenever you use your card always make sure that people cannot see the number you are tapping into the machine, ask/request them to stand back. When using an ATM machine always check it before putting your card in. Look carefully to see if devices have been fitted.

9 Security Self Assessment Questionnaire

Assess the risk to your property by ticking this self assessment sheet.

Perimeter Protection – consider natural surveillance not impeded by landscaping such as trees and hedges? Are there trees and foliage in your grounds?

- | | |
|--|---|
| ▶ Growing wild, obstructing public view | 1 |
| ▶ Well trimmed, allowing good visibility | 3 |

Perimeter Protection – do you have adequate front/side/rear boundary fencing and gates – is the rear gate lockable?

Gates and fencing should be of the same specification, are yours:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ▶ Non existent, low grade or in poor condition | 1 |
| ▶ Well maintained, model specifications | 2 |
| ▶ Well maintained, high specification | 3 |

Front doors:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ▶ At least 44mm thick and solid | 3 |
| ▶ Fitting minimum five lever mortice lock & rim mounted lock (BS 3621 standard) | 3 |
| ▶ Door viewer and door chain/limiter | 3 |
| ▶ Letter box protection with cage if too close to locks | 3 |
| ▶ Latch type or three lever mortise locks | 1 |

Back doors:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ▶ BS 3621 standard five lever mortice sash lock as primary protection | 3 |
| ▶ Fitting key operated mortice bolts 30mm from top and bottom | 3 |
| ▶ Hinge bolts to protect hinges – one bolt per hinge | 3 |

Is the alarm to your premises:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| ▶ None existent | 1 |
| ▶ Bells Only | 2 |
| ▶ Call Centre Monitored | 3 |
| ▶ Service/maintained regularly | 3 |

Have you made a note of your possessions – serial numbers and security marked/posted coded them

- | | |
|-------|---|
| ▶ No | 1 |
| ▶ Yes | 3 |

If you have ticked any boxes (1) then your premises are at risk in the area that you yourself have identified. A (2) box indicates an acceptable approach to security whilst (3) is the preferred option

Garage door defender



ERA garage door locks



Rim locks – nightlatches



Mortice lock / dead lock



Security bolt



For further crime reduction advice please contact your local Crime Reduction Officer.



Neighbourhood Watch is a very effective crime prevention activity. If you wish for further information on Neighbourhood Watch please contact your local Essex Watch Liaison Officer on **101**.

For further advice and information, contact your local Crime Prevention Tactical Advisor on **101**.

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