

PROTECTING YOUR HOME AND BELONGINGS



Call 101 or report an incident to us online
www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/report
In an emergency always call **999**



Introduction

People often ask us for advice on how to prevent crime from happening, particularly in relation to burglary, and we hope you find the information in this booklet useful. It offers a range of simple things that you can do to protect your home, garden, car and bike.

Supporting victims of burglary	3
Protecting your home and belongings	4
Property marking.....	5
Keeping jewellery and valuables safe.....	6
Secure products.....	7
Securing your home when you're away.....	7
Securing your outbuildings	9
Sheds.....	9
Garages.....	9
Securing your garden	10
Preventing fuel theft.....	10
Beating car crime	12
Beating bike crime	13
Community watch schemes	14
Neighbourhood Watch.....	14
Farm Watch, Horse Watch and Community SpeedWatch schemes.....	14
Reporting	16

Supporting victims of burglary

We understand that being burgled, robbed, or having money taken by fraudsters can be deeply upsetting and more than just the hassle of an insurance claim.

We're committed to reducing burglaries and other crimes by identifying and relentlessly pursuing offenders and bringing them to justice. We'll keep you updated and provide you with the best possible service.

Once you've reported a burglary, please take the following additional steps:

- **Preserve the scene.** If your home has been burgled, officers may advise you that a Crime Scene Investigator (CSI) will contact you to arrange a visit. In this scenario, try not to touch anything, especially smooth/shiny surfaces and any point of entry used by the burglar, for example window ledges.
- Cancel any stolen bank cards, cheque books and passbooks.
- Ask your bank if there's been any use of your debit/credit cards or cheque books. If so, note the transaction dates, times, amounts, details and locations, then make us aware of the details as soon as possible.
- Activate any tracking software on your stolen phone or computer.
- Contact your mobile phone provider (whether you have a contract or prepaid phone), to ask for the phone to be blocked. Also ask for the IMEI number, to give to the officer in charge of your case.
- Contact your home insurance company, to find out if you're covered for repairs and replacement locks if your keys have been stolen. They will provide you with any further appropriate advice.

What happens next?

If your home has been burgled, you may receive an initial visit from a police officer or CSI. A few days later, you may receive a visit from a Neighbourhood Policing officer or PCSO, or receive a call from our investigations team if they need additional information. Meanwhile, an investigation will commence.

Protecting your home and belongings



- Always lock all windows and doors, even those in unattended rooms when you're at home.
- Make sure your front and back doors are solid doors, in good condition, with a strong frame.
- All external wooden doors should be fitted with a five-lever mortice dead lock to BS3621 or BS8621 internal thumb turn. It's also advisable to have a security chain and a viewer fitted to your door.
- Letter box restrictors can prevent thieves from accessing the lock from outside.
- Sliding patio doors should have long throw bolts fitted to the opening door.
- Fit key-operated window locks to all downstairs windows and vulnerable ones like easily accessible upstairs windows.
- Remember to remove keys from locked windows. Keep them out of sight in a safe place, but accessible in case of fire.
- If you are replacing windows, consider laminated glass as it's difficult to break. Ensure they meet the relevant British security



standard PAS 24, ideally with third party certification.

- Never leave valuables on display in your windows or near doors – especially those with cat flaps.
- Make sure your home looks occupied. It's worth getting automatic time switches to switch lights and a radio on and off, also consider 'smart' appliances.
- Invest in plug timers for lights and radios to give the appearance of people being at home.
- If possible, have a security alarm fitted and consider installing CCTV cameras.
- Download tracking software on to phones, laptops and any other gadgets you may have.
- Record all your property on national property database www.immobilise.com to deter thieves and increase your chances of being reunited with stolen property or mark them with a specialist product, please see [Secured By Design](#) as above.

- Report any suspicious behaviour. An offender may check out a number of properties for entry points before finding a vulnerable home.
- Consider joining a Neighbourhood Watch scheme (see page 14).

Property marking

There are a range of property marking options available that may be used to mark your valuables, such as permanent forensic marking solutions or marking your property by engraving or using a permanent marker/paint.

[Secured By Design](#)

[BikeRegister](#)

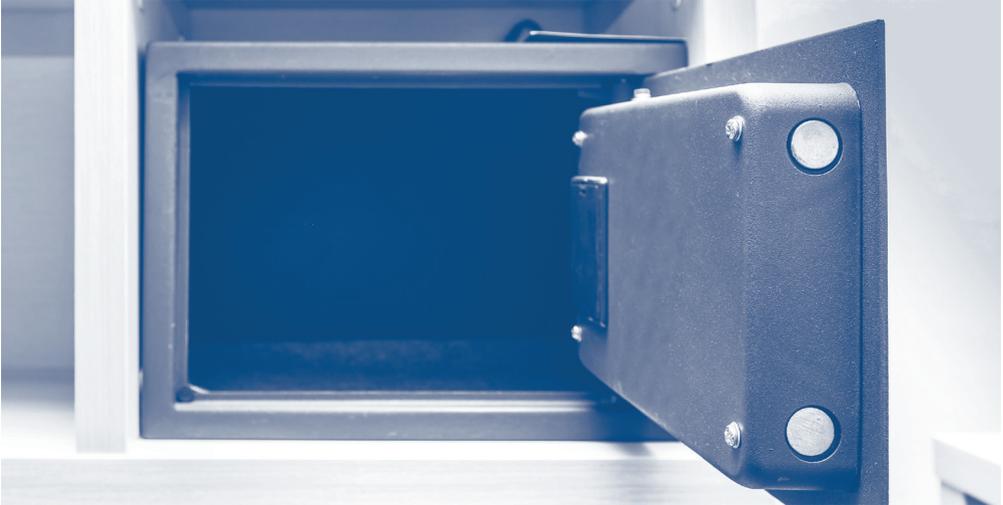
(the national cycle database)

[Sold Secure](#)

(security product testing and approval)

Expert advice should be sought if you intend to mark high-value items, such as art and antiques, to ensure that you are choosing a suitable product that will not damage or devalue your item.

Protecting your home and belongings contd.



Keeping jewellery and valuables safe

- Consider fitting a suitable safe to store jewellery and other valuables. Various grades of safe are available according to the value and number of items you want to store in it.
- Before purchasing a safe, it is advised that the owner consults with their insurer as they may require a certain grading to cover the contents in case of loss.
- Safes should be supplied and fitted by a company approved by the Master Locksmiths Association [Master Locksmiths Association - Locksmith near me \(fully vetted\)](#)
- The safe should be Sold Secure tested and approved – you can check the details on www.soldsecure.com
- Safes should be fixed to a solid wall or floor with the fixings inside the safe.
- Take photographs of your valuables and write a short description of each of them. Register your valuables on www.immobilise.com



Secure products

Look out for products that have the Sold Secure or Secured by Design logos when choosing security products. For more information about security products or additional crime prevention tips, visit the following websites.



www.soldsecure.com

www.securedbydesign.com

Securing your home when you're away

- Make sure your home looks occupied. It's worth getting automatic time switches, to switch lights or radios on and off daily. Also consider 'smart' appliances.
- Don't leave valuable items like TVs, laptops, jewellery etc, visible through windows.
- Cancel deliveries of milk,

newspapers etc discreetly – don't announce your plans to be away to a shop full of people.

- Only tell people who need to know that you're going to be away. Be careful about what information you divulge on social media.
- Cut the lawns before you go.
- Don't have your home address visible on your luggage for outbound journeys. Have this on the inside of your bags only.
- Lock all outside doors and windows. If you have a burglar alarm, make sure it's set.





Securing your outbuildings



Sheds

- Avoid keeping high value items in your shed. If this can't be avoided, make sure you secure it. A tough pad bar (also called hasp and staple), fitted with a padlock and secured with coach bolts, is the most effective way of securing shed doors.
- Padlocks should be of hardened steel and of Sold Secure standard - visit www.soldsecure.com for more information. Buy the close-shackled variety to prevent hacksaws/bolt croppers being used.
- Replace standard door hinges with strap hinges secured by coach bolts or use security screws on existing hinges.
- Shed windows should be screwed shut or have window locks. Consider fitting a metal grille.
- Chain tools, cycles and other valuable equipment together, using a high security chain or cable and padlock. Anchor the chain into the wall or floor, or install a security standard cycle cage/pod.

- Alarms can be extended to garages and sheds. Alternatively, buy a battery-operated audible alarm.
- Mark your tools with your postcode and house number, or the first two letters of your house name, then register the details on www.immobilise.com

Garages

- Most standard 'up and over' garage doors are easily overcome by a burglar. You can prevent this by drilling a hole through the channel above the wheels and fitting a padlock. Alternatively, fit a hasp and staple each side of the door with a close-shackled padlock (preferably Sold Secure standard) You could also fit a Garage Defender or Garage Guardian.
- If you have an internal door between your garage and house, make sure it's secured with a mortice deadlock (BS 3621) and mortice bolts.
- When replacing a garage door, consider installing one with an enhanced security standard.

Securing your garden



- Check for weak spots where a thief could get in – for example a low / sagging fence or a back gate with a weak lock.
- Rear garden fences should generally be 1.8 metres high and kept in good condition. Fix trellis on top of fence panels to make them more difficult to climb over.
- Fences at the front of the property should be low, no higher than 1.2 metres to offer good visibility.
- Fit a strong, lockable high gate across any side passage to stop a thief getting to the back of your house, where they can work undisturbed.
- Use thorny hedges and plants along boundaries, under ground-floor windows and up drainpipes, to make it harder for thieves to gain access.
- Cut back any vegetation that might shield a thief from view and any trees that could give easy roof access.
- Consider fitting dusk 'til dawn security lights to the outside of your home at the front and back.
- Don't leave ladders or tools outside, or if necessary, chain them up because they could be used to break into your property.
- Photograph valuable tools and unusual garden ornaments and property mark them if possible.
- At detached or remote properties, consider fitting a gate at the entrance of your drive and keep it shut whenever possible. Lock the gate overnight.

Preventing fuel theft

If you have fuel storage tanks on your property, please consider the following:

- Avoid putting storage tanks in isolated areas. If this isn't possible, consider fencing or planting that will disguise the tank.
- Lock your fuel tank wherever possible and don't leave containers nearby that could be used to steal the fuel.



Beating car crime



- Lock doors, windows, the boot and sunroof - every time you leave your car, however briefly.
- Don't leave bags, coats or money on display. The cost of replacing a broken window is often far more than the value of your stolen items. If you can, take these things with you. If you can't, lock everything out of sight in the boot.
- Never leave driving documents or personal letters inside your car. They could help a thief to sell your car or provide a cover story if stopped by the police.
- Don't leave easily removeable satnavs on display when you're not in your car.
- Never set your home address in your satnav for your start or return journeys, use an area near to your home you know. If your keys are stolen, a criminal may use your satnav setting to direct them to your home.
- Keep valuables out of sight while you're driving and consider keeping the doors locked.
- Take the ignition key out, even when the car is parked in your drive or garage and always set the immobiliser. If you don't have an immobiliser, consider having one fitted. Steering wheel locks are still an effective way to reduce the risk of your car being stolen.
- Always keep your car keys in a safe place at home, away from windows and doors and preferably in a locked cupboard or cabinet.
- Consider keeping electronic fobs/keys in a faraday bag (RFID blockers) to block the signal and prevent relay theft.
- When choosing a car park, look out for the Park Mark logo (www.parkmark.co.uk) which indicates a car park that has security measures in place.



Beating bike crime



- If you don't need quick-release levers, replace them with bolt-up security skewers, which are more difficult to undo.
 - Always lock up your bike at home, even inside your flat or halls of residence, and secure it to a fixed, immovable object.
 - If storing your bike in a shed or garage, secure it with a high security chain or cable and a padlock. Anchor the chain into the wall or floor.
 - Invest in a good lock which has achieved Sold Secure standard www.soldsecure.com
 - If you're out and about, always try to lock your bike to a purpose-built stand that is firmly anchored in the ground.
 - When locking your bike, where possible ensure it passes through at least one wheel and the frame, whether at home or out and about.
 - If you leave your bike in public, try to take all removable parts with you.
- Take a picture of your bike, especially if you have customised it in any way.
 - Register your bike at www.bikeregister.com and www.immobilise.com
 - Insure your bike, either on your home contents insurance or separately. If you use your home contents insurance, don't forget to cover it for theft away from home.

Community watch schemes



Neighbourhood Watch

Neighbourhood Watch is a voluntary network of schemes where neighbours come together, along with the police and local partners, to build safe and friendly communities.

Neighbourhood Watch isn't about being a nosy or interfering neighbour, it's about communities working together to help reduce local crime, as well as looking out for each other and vulnerable members of the community.

It has proved to be a very effective example of communities working in partnership, to prevent crime and vandalism, reduce fear of crime and generally improve the quality of life in an area. Some household insurers will also offer discounts to customers who are members of a Neighbourhood Watch.

To find out about joining or setting up a scheme in your area, contact us online at www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/apply/neighbourhood-watch-scheme or call 101 and ask for your local Neighbourhood Watch Administrator.

Farm Watch, Horse Watch and Community SpeedWatch schemes

There are a range of local watch schemes across our county, such as Farm Watch, Horse Watch and Community SpeedWatch. To find out more about these schemes and how to join or set up a scheme in your area, visit www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/apply



Reporting

Call 101 or report an incident to us online
www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/report

In an emergency, or if a crime is in progress, always call **999**

Alternatively, you can call CrimeStoppers anonymously.

CrimeStoppers.

0800 555 111

100% anonymous. Always.

Avon and Somerset Police
SERVE.PROTECT.RESPECT.

www.avonandsomerset.police.uk | Follow us on    

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