

Lock 'em Out

Beat the Burglar



SECURE PROTECT PREVENT

A Home Security Guide

Keep your home secure
Lock 'em Out



EFDC Safer Communities Team Tel: 01992 564608

Email: saferrcommunities@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Web: www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk



This booklet is a guide on how you can improve your home security and reduce the risk of becoming a victim of burglary. Most of the products described are available from high street retailers and, in many cases, are capable of being fitted by someone who is competent in DIY.



Introduction

The county of Essex is a safe place in which to live and work. However, every home in the county has the potential to be subject of crime. Local analysis shows that domestic burglary (breaking and entering) is a common crime in the county and is a concern to many residents.

A lot of burglaries happen due to a lack of basic security. In fact, in 1 in 5 cases the burglar does not even have to use force. They get in through an open window or door, or by using trickery and deceit. In most cases these crimes could have been avoided by taking simple preventative measures. This booklet explains some elementary steps that

you can take to secure your home and property. It will help you identify vulnerable locations in your home and advise you regarding appropriate measures you can take to reduce the risk of becoming a victim.

Please take time to read this booklet which has been produced on behalf of the county Community Safety Partnerships.



Basic principles

Generally, burglary is an opportunist crime. A burglar will select a target because it offers the best opportunity to carry out a crime undetected and with the fewest number of obstacles in the way. A building that looks unoccupied and unsecured is far more likely to be targeted than one which is properly secured. Signs the burglar will look for are:-

- side gates open
- accessible windows open (particularly ground floor windows)
- wheelie bins and ladders left out allowing access to otherwise inaccessible windows
- garden tools available to force entry
- untrimmed hedges or high fences preventing natural surveillance
- milk bottles/parcels left on doorstep
- newspapers/mail in letter box or piled up on the floor and visible through a glazed front door panel
- unlit houses after dark.

Each of these makes access to the building far simpler and is an indication to the prospective burglar that it is worth a second look.

Residents of multi occupancy dwellings or flats should be mindful not to grant entry to people via an entry phone system, if they do not know them. Always be wary of anyone loitering by the communal access controlled door to flats. They may be waiting for the opportunity to follow ('tailgate') you into the building which overcomes the security provided by access control.

Are you leaving a thief the key to your house?

- never leave a spare key concealed anywhere near the front door or attached to string on the inside of the letterbox
- prevent letterbox burglaries by storing house and car keys away from the front door and fit letterbox plates or cages
- do not label your house keys in case you lose them and they fall into the wrong hands
- where possible, try to keep valuables out of sight from windows. Consider fitting blinds or net curtains on windows easily viewed from the street.

Make it look as though your house is occupied even if it is not

- install timers that switch lights or radios on and off automatically
- have a neighbour or friend pop round to clear your letter box or doorstep
- encourage a neighbour to park on your drive if it is empty
- if going out after dark, close the curtains, leave some lights on and a radio playing
- tune a radio into a talk station to give the impression that people are in the house.

If you are away for extended periods:

- cancel the delivery of milk, news papers and mail order deliveries
- enlist the help of a neighbour, friend or relative to keep a regular eye on your property and keep the front door clear of deliveries
- if you are prepared to leave a key with a willing neighbour/relative, ask for curtains to be drawn and lights to be put on at night. If snow is on the ground a few footprints will make the house appear inhabited

- check your insurance policy. Some insurance policies for contents do not cover you if you are away for more than 30 days
- set your burglar alarm.

Protecting your property - buying time

The two biggest concerns any burglar has when deciding whether to break into a house is the time it is likely to take and the risk of detection through the noise of breaking in. Security devices will make it harder for the burglar to break into a property.

All that is required is a methodical way of considering your security. Home security is all about awareness – look at your home as if you had locked yourself out and work out where you would try and get in. By applying this simple process you are viewing your home in the same way a burglar will.

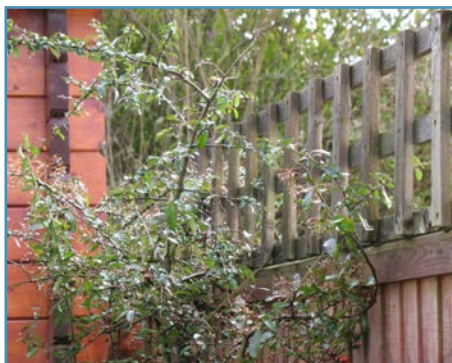
Start by looking at your property from the front. Avoid creating hidden areas where intruders can lurk unseen. Make them as clear and open as possible with no obstructed lines of sight from the highway. At least have a clear area above waist level so any intruders will be visible. Consider security lighting for any areas that are in deep shadow at night. Gravel paths and drives are an ideal way of cheaply and effectively discouraging intruders from your garden. The gravel makes a loud noise under foot which can be heard well at night.

Make the back garden a difficult area to access with prickly hedging or fencing around the perimeter. You may need planning permission for fencing over 2m high at the back of your property. Check with the council planning office. If you live in a conservation area check whether there are any other restrictions that apply. (See our leaflet on defensive planting).

Fences & borders

The most vulnerable part of the house is at the rear. Evidence suggests nearly two thirds of all domestic burglaries take place via the rear or side windows and doors. If burglars can be prevented from reaching these points the chance of attack on the house itself will be reduced.

A 1.8 meter fence all around the back garden will help keep the house secure. If the fence is topped with 30 to 45cms of opened or other similarly weak trellising, it will prevent most burglars from scaling it.



Trellis & Planting

Fence toppings can also benefit from suitable planting. Barbed wire, which burglars may tackle, (and can contravene the Occupiers Liability Act), can be better replaced with a prickly plant such as a climbing rose so long as sufficient supports have been stretched along the top of the fence.

Do not keep wheelie bins on your property where intruders could reach them, as they make ideal climbing aids to reach first floor windows or scale fences and gates.

Hedges and shrubs in the front garden should be kept to a height of no more than 1m in order to avoid giving a burglar a screen behind which he can conceal himself. Using prickly plants to create a physical and psychological barrier is something that has been done for many years and is known as 'defensive planting'. Criminals do not like climbing through prickly plants and hedges. They know that a small item of ripped clothing or blood can help the police identify them. However, prickly plants can be dangerous to young children playing in the garden - keep this in mind when deciding on whether or not to use them as a defence against burglars.

Gates

Solid wooden gates offer easy entry for thieves because they are sturdy to climb and tend to be tucked away at the sides of houses. Make these harder to climb by covering the cross members with a panel so there is no obvious foothold. Wrought iron gates may be a far more effective deterrent. The ornamental ironwork makes climbing difficult and any intruders can be seen through them. It is always wise to use at least two locks on a gate if possible. If a burglar cannot go over or through the gate, they may decide to try to take it off completely. This can be prevented by welding metal washers over the hinge pins to prevent them from being lifted off.

Always visibly property mark your gardening equipment and valuables with your postcode and house number (see our leaflet on property marking).

Garden Sheds

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 machinery and cycles 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.



Protecting your property - buying time CONTINUED

Do not make a burglar's life easier by leaving gardening tools available to act as the perfect implement with which to force an entry. Always lock them away securely after use. Do not leave ladders around to provide easy access to otherwise inaccessible parts of your house. They should be chained and padlocked to a strong post or wall.

All opening windows require good window locks. If they are never used consider screwing them shut. 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 harmful chemicals.

There are several commercial alarms designed for use in sheds that normally emit a loud audible alarm when activated. Some systems can be linked to an existing house alarm. If in doubt speak to your local police Crime Prevention Officer.

Garages

Garages are frequently used for storing all manner of goods. The high value of the property contained in them is well known by burglars and is a favourite location to search as security is often poor. If you already have a burglar alarm system, extend it to the garage. Alternatively, there are

various stand-alone alarm devices on the market specifically designed for remote use in garages or sheds. Your local Crime Prevention Officer will be able to advise you on the appropriate product. Consider concreting angle iron posts into the floor to secure valuable items to using strong locks and chains.

Wooden Double Leaf Doors – Where possible 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 - fit with a hasp and staple together with a padlock as above. 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

If opening inwards this should be fitted with a 5 lever mortice deadlock and, if opening outwards, should additionally be fitted with hinge bolts. 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.



Hinge Bolt

Protecting your home

Door security

If you are considering fitting a new/replacement door and frame consider PAS 24:2007 standard. This is the minimum police requirement for door, frame and lock security which meets the Secured by Design criteria. Full specifications can be found at www.securedbydesign.com.



A rim latch (Yale type) on its own is not sufficient. You should consider fitting a 5 lever mortice deadlock to BS 3621. Look for the British Standard kite mark. Ensure that the door frame is sound and securely fastened to the fabric of the building. The door should be suitable for external use and of substantial construction, at least 44mm thick to support the mortice lock and hung on three strong 100mm hinges. The rim latch and the mortice should be fitted 45 to 60cm apart.

Additional security can be achieved by 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 re-inforcer on the outside covering the lock area.

Doors with glazed panels are less secure than solid doors; consider replacing ordinary or toughened glass panels with laminated glass as it offers much greater resistance to attack especially in the vicinity of the door latch.

For added safety and security fit a door viewer and door chain or limiter. These will enable you to deal with callers to your front door whilst retaining a level of security.

UPVC front doors are generally unsuitable for retro-fit 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 /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.



5 Lever Mortice Lock

Lift - Lock - Remove

It is essential to always lock the multi-point bolts at the top and bottom of the door in place with the key when leaving the property or when going to bed. Burglars can easily disengage the multi point locking system if they are not secured which makes gaining entry very easy. Remember to remove the key but keep it nearby should you need to leave the building in an emergency.



Lift

Lock

Remove

Door chains should be fitted in all cases where practical. There are commercially manufactured

chains that are intended for use on UPVC doors and securely fix without screwing into the plastic. Likewise key operated door chains can be used by the elderly as authorised persons can still gain access in the event of emergency. In addition, a door viewer should be considered when there is no view or a restricted view of callers.



Door Chain for UPVC Doors

Letter boxes

Letter boxes should be considered as an opening that can be used by the criminal, either to extract goods from within in close proximity to the door such as door keys, or to work vulnerable locking devices from the inside. An internal cover plate offers additional security as does a letter basket, though you might wish to consider removing the bottom, allowing the post to fall to the floor and preventing theft.

Back Door

The door should be fitted with a 5 lever mortice sash lock halfway up the door. Unlike front doors, many insurance companies do not specify that they should be to British Standard, though the use of this type of lock is recommended. The sash lock should be supplemented by mortice rack bolts fitted at the top and bottom of the door or surface-mounted locking bolts top and bottom.

Any glass panels should be laminated and fitted from the inside to prevent the putty or beading being removed.

French doors

Also known as French windows, they are less secure than single leaf doors. Both doors should be fitted with mortice rack bolts. Alternatively, use surface-mounted locking bolts top and bottom to provide rigidity. For extra security and if the style of door will accept it, a mortice sash lock can be fitted.



Mortice Rack Bolt

As most French Doors open outward, the addition of hinge bolts is also recommended. Consider replacing ordinary or toughened glass panels with laminated glass. UPVC French Doors are generally unsuitable for retro-fit security devices. You can replace the lock with one to Technical Specification TS 007, which provides greater security and is far more robust. Look for the British Standards kite mark.

Patio door

Sliding patio doors have recently diminished in popularity. However, a patio door when open, generally leaves a wide open space which allows bulkier goods to be removed. Unless the doors are fitted with a multi-point locking system, it is best to fit extra locks. These are fitted on the bottom fixed frame pushing through to the sliding frame in the centre and on the side frame at the opening point no lower than a third of the way from the top of the door.

Protecting your home CONTINUED

Make sure there is enough frame to fit them on if drilling is required. If in doubt, consult a competent builder, installer or manufacturer. If you can lift the door simply screw wood blocks of a suitable depth into the channel above the opening door to prevent this. Alternatively, anti-lift devices are available from locksmiths.

Windows

If you are considering fitting replacement windows consider those which comply with British Standard 7950, 1997 for enhanced security performance for casements, tilt/turn windows for domestic applications. Police approved security specification for windows can be found at;- www.securedbydesign.com.

Wooden casement;- Fit locks that secure the frames together in preference to locks that simply secure the handle or stay bar. Casement windows, by their very design, need to be locked by securing the window to the frame.

It is possible to secure wooden casements in the open position for purposes of ventilation, very necessary in hot weather, or child safety. These are particularly appropriate in a ground floor bedroom situation where someone wishes to sleep with the window open. Likewise they are well suited to upper floors where windows can be locked open, allowing ventilation but, at the same time, preventing children from opening the window beyond a safe limit.

If you are considering replacing your existing windows, look for the British Standard 7950 kite mark. It has been established to set specific manufacturing standards of design and security for casement windows.

Note: Georgian wired glass may look strong, but it will easily break. It is a fire safety glass not a security glass.

Wooden sliding sash;- Sash stops are strong and convenient to use and do not need to be removed from the window when fully open. They can be set into the top frame allowing the window to be left open about 10cm for ventilation but still secure.

For greater security they should be fitted in pairs. An alternative form of lock is the dual screw. These bolt the two sashes together. When used they also reduce draughts. The beading which holds the glass in place is frequently only pinned. The window can be made more secure by gluing in addition to pinning or screwing the beading, in place.



Dual Screw Bolt

A modern style is the tilting 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.

Metal Crittall;- You can either secure the window or the handle to prevent opening. One of the main problems with this type of window is the narrow profile of the frame, making it difficult to fit devices. For this reason there are locks

specifically designed for this type of window. It is probably easier to secure the handle where there is normally more room to fit the lock. Use a fanlight lock to secure the fanlight window.

Aluminium;- The highest level of security fitted by the manufacturer on most aluminium windows is a locking handle, which is not particularly secure. This is because it is the handle which is being locked and not the window. As most handles are not of a good casting standard they have a tendency to break under pressure, or come loose from the frame.

It is possible to fit extra locks to aluminium windows, but care should be taken to ensure that there is enough metal around the window to be able to fit the lock without contacting the glass. Suitable locks designed for this purpose are available.

Louvres;- Louvred windows' inherent lack of security is well recognised. Glass slats can easily be removed from the frame allowing easy access to premises. Louvred windows should be replaced. A temporary measure is to fix the glass in both frames with an epoxy resin adhesive. If the windows are sited in a vulnerable position, you may need to fit a grille or bars, though the better option would be complete replacement.

UPVC / PVCU ;- In many cases it is not possible to fit 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 locking system.

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 (where the only means of security is a locking handle).

It is preferable for the windows to be fitted with internal beading to avoid the possibility of the glass being removed from the outside. If you are considering replacing your existing windows, look for the British Standard 7950 kite mark. It has been established to set specific manufacturing standards of design and security for windows.

Leaded windows;- These are not secure unless you fit secondary laminated glazing, polycarbonate sheeting, or internal grilles.

Glazing — points to consider

- Consider replacing ordinary or toughened glass with laminated glass
- Alternatively place a plastic glazing film over the glazed area to prevent the glass from shattering. Please note the clarity of the glass will be reduced and the film can fade and discolour over time.
- When replacing glass in wooden windows use a glazing mastic to bond it to the frame, as it is far tougher than putty.



Protecting your home CONTINUED

Lighting – Exterior

A useful addition to perimeter security can be exterior lighting, either switched manually or automatically operated. Lighting should be seen as an aid to deter a burglar. One form of lighting is passive infra-red (PIR) which is activated when someone comes into its field of vision. The light can be set to stay on for a set time and then it will re-set if the cause of its activation is no longer present.

A passive infra-red unit can activate single or multiple lights which can be useful on the approach to a front door or garage. Not only does it illuminate someone who approaches your house, but also when you approach enabling you to see if anyone is lurking in the shadows. It must be remembered though that these type of lights can be activated by animals. Also, you do not want the light to be activated every time your neighbours go into their garden or when someone walks past the front of your property. You must also make sure that your light does not intrude into your neighbours' windows or those of passing vehicles. Common forms of PIR activated lighting involve halogen lamps. These do not have a great longevity and bulbs are expensive to replace.

An alternative solution, especially at the rear of houses, is to fit dusk to dawn lighting. These lamps consist of energy saving bulbs activated by a photoelectric cell. This turns the lights on at dusk and off at dawn. It is a much less obtrusive light and, although it is on all night, it is generally cheaper to run than spotlights. These lights can be DIY fitted, but if you are not sure, it is essential that you contact a qualified electrician.



Dusk to Dawn Lamp

Lighting – Interior

Leaving lights switched on inside the house while the house is unoccupied can substantially help to give the impression to a passer-by that the house is occupied. Select 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 as a thief may guess that the premises are unoccupied.

There are many automatic timing devices that will turn lights on and off in a random fashion. They may even be set to control other electrical appliances such as the radio. Automatic switching will help to convince the casual thief that the house is occupied.



Automatic Timer

Burglar Alarm Systems

Alarm systems are a worthwhile investment in the protection of your home. You are far less likely to become the victim of a burglary at home if you have a correctly fitted and well maintained burglar alarm. If you are considering fitting a burglar alarm it is advisable to contact your local Crime Prevention Officer who will be able to give

free and impartial advice on the many different systems available. Your Crime Prevention Officer will be able to offer advice concerning alarm companies regulated by The National Security Inspectorate (NSI) and Security Systems and Alarm Inspection Board (SSAIB).

Property Marking

The main crime prevention purpose of marking your property is to make it less attractive for thieves to steal. Marked property gives police a chance to establish who the rightful owner is and return it. It will also allow police to prove to a court where the property has come from and improve the chance of obtaining a conviction. Permanent overt marking of property makes it less attractive to thieves. However, property can be secretly marked with UV pens. There are also a number of other property marking products which can be purchased commercially and it is worth asking your local Crime Prevention Officer for advice.

Photography

Taking photographs of property such as jewellery is recommended for identification purposes, particularly if it is not property marked. Please remember to include something like a ruler in the photograph to give an idea of scale and a written description of the item.

Doorstep Callers

Not all burglars have to break into your property. A small minority of crimes occur by the burglar knocking at your door and tricking their way in. They claim to be from a utility company or other official body. Once inside your home one person distracts you whilst a second slips in and steals what they can find. The most popular ploy that they use is to say they are from the water board and they have to turn off your water because

there is a flood nearby. Some basic steps to deal with doorstep callers:

- Try to keep a clear head. Don't let a caller panic you by what he or she says
- Always use a door chain – there are many on the market including those that fit UPVC doors and ones that are locking
- Consider fitting a door viewer to check on callers if you cannot see who is at the door
- Always check identification – look up the office telephone number in the phone book and call it to verify credentials
- If in doubt keep them out – make an appointment for them to call again when you have a friend or relative present
- If you have any disability arrange with your utility company for callers to come on a specific time and day and agree a password for them to use
- Never buy goods or services from cold callers at the door
- Join the Council's Nominated Neighbour Scheme.

Always remember, if you are offered a deal that sounds too good to be true - it probably is!

Essex Watch/Neighbourhood Watch

There are benefits in belonging to a Watch scheme as many insurance companies offer a discount to members (you need to check this with your own insurance company). If you are considering setting up any type of Watch scheme contact the Essex Watch Liaison Officer on 101 for help and advice.



Further sources of information & assistance:

EFDC Safer Communities Team

Tel: **01992 564608**

Email: **safercommunities@eppingforestdc.gov.uk**

Web: **www.safercommunitiesepping.org.uk**

Essex Police

Always dial 999 in an emergency

Non-emergency 101

Web: **www.essex.police.uk**

Home Office

Web: **www.homeoffice.gov.uk**

(Advice and information about crime prevention)

Crimestoppers

Web: **www.crimestoppers-uk.org**

*If you wish to give information about crime or criminals anonymously,
please call **0800 555 111***

Secured By Design

official web site of the police recommending approved security products

Web: **www.securedbydesign.com**



Keep your home secure - Lock 'em Out!