

- Make sure all valuables are out of sight.
- Lock all external doors and windows.
- Lock all side or back gates.
- Put all tools away and lock your garage and shed with proper security locks.

Shed Security

Many people take a great deal of trouble securing their house but leave expensive property in a shed which is either unlocked or so old and run down that it would not stop a thief. We see an increase in the number of thefts from garden sheds in summer months but you can help to prevent this by:

- Making sure that your shed is in good condition
- Fit a good lock on your shed door. The fitting should be bolted through the door of the shed and reinforced at the back with a steel plate. The hasp should have concealed screws or coach bolts fitted
- Fit any windows with a grille
- Security mark property such as lawnmowers and garden furniture
- Never leave items unattended in the garden, even if you are just "popping" into the house
- If you leave items such as pedal cycles in your shed make sure

they are security marked and secure them to the inside wall of the building

- Install a 'Dusk till Dawn' security light to light up your garden

For further information please call your local Safer Neighbourhood Team.

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Sedgefield Locality

Tel: 01388 816166

Derwentside Locality

Tel: 01207 693693

Durham Locality

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Please ask us if you would like this document summarised in another language or format.

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The Safe Durham Partnership

Altogether safer



Home Security Information Booklet



Home Security

County Durham is a safe place to live. Burglary levels across County Durham are low. You can help us to keep it that way.

You are less likely to be burgled now than at any time in the past 20 years. If you have your home broken into it is very upsetting. Most burglaries are done on the spur of the moment and can be avoided by you taking a few commonsense safety measures.

Here are some things you can do to keep your home safe:

- Always lock your doors when you go out. Don't leave your front door unlocked even if you are only 'popping out' for a short time. Burglary is quick - most thieves take less than 5 minutes to break in to your house, steal your property and leave
- Fit good quality locks to your doors and windows. And use them
- When you are out of the house make your home look like there is someone in. Use timer switches on the lights and a radio. If you are going away, even for a short time, make sure that you cancel any milk and newspaper deliveries. If you can, arrange for a friend to collect

your post and close your curtains.

- Keep an eye on your neighbour's property and ask them to do the same for you
- Always keep keys in a safe place which is away from windows and doors
- Remember if you can get into your home without your keys then so can a burglar
- Install a burglar alarm
- Join a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. If there is not one in your area you could think about starting one
- You can mark valuable items with a UV pen, by etching, stamping or using a permanent marker. If you mark them with your postcode and house number, or the first two letters of your house name, the police can see that the property belongs to you and can return it to you if it is stolen and found
- Most importantly - after you have fitted all your security devices: Use Them. The most expensive lock doesn't stop a burglar if it isn't locked!

Bogus Callers

Burglaries are sometimes committed by doorstep callers, people who call and offer services

or skills. These criminals are most commonly known as bogus callers or distraction burglars. Some bogus callers may dress in a way to try and confuse you – for example by pretending to be from water, gas or electric companies or work contractors. If anyone calls at your door when you don't expect them ask to see their identification, keep the chain on the door while you look at it. If in doubt do not let them in.

Doorstep Code

Don't open your door to unexpected callers – check their identity first, use the Doorstep Code for uninvited callers.

- Always put the security chain on the door before opening it
- Ask the caller who they are and where they are from
- Ask to see some form of identification - take the card from them and examine it
- Check with the company who they claim to be from, using a telephone number out of the telephone directory, not the number on the card, as an accomplice could answer the call!
- If you have any doubts tell the caller you want to make an appointment for them to call

back at a more convenient time - when you will be able to have a friend or relative with you. Genuine callers will understand and will be happy to comply with these arrangements

- Remember - you do not have to let a stranger into your home - even if they claim it is an emergency

Going On Holiday

Make sure your home looks like someone is in. If you can, ask a relative, a trusted friend or neighbour to look after your house while you are away. Ask them to open and close your curtains and collect your mail.

- Use an automatic timer-switch to turn your lights on when it goes dark.
- Cancel any deliveries such as newspapers or milk.
- Cut the lawn before you go so it doesn't look overgrown while you are away.
- Consider leaving important documents and valuable items with other family members or a bank or lock them in a safe.
- Close all internal doors and unplug all electrical items not in use.
- If you have a burglar alarm, make sure it is set.