

BURGLAR WARNING

This weekend sees the clocks going back which means that darkness comes that much earlier. It also means that there will be an increase in household burglaries and other crimes over the next few months.

This is not an unsubstantiated remark but based on crime figures from previous years. This is a historical fact.

Most of us associate dark nights with cold, wet and miserable weather. On the other hand, burglars, the hyenas of the night, like the dark as they do not like to be seen carrying out their evil trade. So we give you a timely warning – **Be Prepared.**

The more steps you take to protect your home and property, the less chance you have of becoming a victim of crime.

So what should you do?

Well, this is a good time to review your security. Go around your property including outbuildings and imagine that you are a burglar. How would you break in? If you can think of a way in, so can a burglar. Now is the time to close any gaps in your security.

Make it difficult for the burglars

Most burglars are committed by opportunist thieves. In four out of ten burglaries, they do not even have to use force – they get in through an open or insecure window or door. Have you fitted strong locks to your windows and doors? Even small windows such as skylights need locks – a thief can get through any gap larger than a human head. Louvre windows are especially vulnerable because the slats can be removed easily from the frames so glue the slats in place or even better still, replace them with fixed glass windows. As a last resort, consider fitting security grilles to very vulnerable windows.

Burglars hate the light

Good exterior lights are a powerful deterrent. No dark corner around your property should be a hiding place for a thief. There is such a wide range of reasonably priced sensor lights now available that you should be able to light up all around your property if someone passes the infra red sensor. These sensor lights are also very useful when you come home in the dark. They will light up your way to the garage or door, making life that little bit easier.

Many burglaries tend to happen when property appears to be empty. So it is important to try to make your house appear occupied when you are not there. This is particularly important in the early evening. To do this you can use time switches which can turn a light, radio or tv on. The latest models can switch on and off at random intervals as an added protection.

Make sure that valuable items are out of sight. This may mean you have to move your furniture a little but better to ensure that your latest hi-fi equipment is not seen through your window as this can only tempt the thief.

Alarm the Burglar

There is no doubt the best deterrent of all is the burglar alarm. Unfortunately, there are many systems on the market from DIY alarms to the more sophisticated. To buy the most expensive one you can afford is always good advice. However, you should obtain specialist advice and a number of quotations before you make a decision.

Consult your insurance company for their recommended list and by using one from their list you could receive a discount on your householders insurance premium

Garages and Outbuildings

These are favourite places for thieves to steal your goods. Never leave a garage door unlocked especially if it has a connecting door to the house – even if the inner door is locked, the thief can work on this door in the privacy of your garage.

Fit outbuilding doors with strong padlocks. If you have to keep valuable items in these buildings, such as bicycles, strimmers etc., make sure they are chained to a sturdy post or something similar.

Padlock ladders to the inside of a garage or outbuilding to stop thieves using them to reach inaccessible windows. If there is no room inside, chain and padlock them to a sturdy bracket on an outside wall away from prying eyes.

Outer Defence

A thorny hedge along the boundary of your property can be a powerful deterrent. However, make sure that the front of your house is visible to passers by so that the burglar cannot work unseen.