

Garden Security

- Your front garden should not provide cover for a burglar. Hedges or fences at the front of your home should be limited to 1 metre high.
- At the rear of your property, hedges, fences or walls should be at least 1.8 metres high. Gates leading to the rear of your property should be the same height and padlocked.
- Move ladders, tables, chairs and wheelie bins so that they cannot be used to climb on. If possible, chain and padlock them to a strong anchor point.
- Fit lighting in your garden.
- Walking on gravel is noisy and can help deter intruders
- Close your garden gate and lock it from the inside.
- Store tools and equipment somewhere secure after use so they don't get used to break into your home.

Securing your shed

Sheds are often targeted by thieves because they are not designed to store valuable equipment and property - they were originally designed to house potting plants. Their fairly flimsy construction makes them easy to break into via the door, windows, walls or even the roof.

However, many homes have little outside storage space, so the shed inevitably becomes a place for storing items that are not wanted indoors.

Ways to better secure your shed:

- Fit a strong hasp and padlock to your shed door. Make sure the door is strong enough to resist being kicked or pushed in. Replace standard hinges with strap hinges secured by coach bolts or use security screws on existing hinges.
- Consider fitting a battery-operated shed alarm.
- Visibly mark the property you keep in your shed and garage and use anchor points to secure larger tools and equipment.
- Register your valuables on the national online property database Immobilise so that Police can reunite you with them if they are ever stolen and later recovered, www.immobilise.com.

Secure your home whilst you're on holiday

Follow the advice below to help keep your home safe while you're away.

- Fit good quality kite marked British Standard locks or bolts to all outside doors. Lock all windows and doors and remove the keys to a safe place when you leave the house.
- If you have an intruder alarm, make sure it's set. If you don't have one consider having an approved alarm system installed.

- Make use of timer plugs with lamps and radios to make your house seem occupied. Try and let a trusted friend or neighbour know that you're going to be away from home. You could ask a trusted neighbour or friend to collect post, open and close curtains.
- Don't leave valuable items such as laptops and jewellery in view of windows. Lock valuable items away in a ground anchored safe or you could consider leaving important documents and valuable items with other family members whilst away.
- Make sure all access points are secured such as gates and activate any external security lighting that you may have.
- Ensure gardening equipment, tools and ladders are put away and securely stored. Don't leave them lying around in your garden as they could aid offenders.
- Ensure that sheds and out buildings are locked and secured. Use good quality locks on garages and sheds (ensure screws on latches and hinges cannot be undone easily from the outside) and where possible ensure that they are alarmed.
- Register your valuables online on the national property database at www.immobilise.com. You can register almost any kind of item on the database free of charge. Immobilise helps Police reunite stolen items with their rightful owners.
- Cancel milk and newspaper deliveries if you have them. Don't announce your departure to a shop full of people. Only tell people who need to know you're going away.
- Think before posting status' or commenting on social media about going on holiday. You wouldn't display a sign in your window advertising that you're going on holiday, so don't advertise it online.
- Make sure that you have up-to-date contents and buildings insurance.
- Don't have your home address showing on your luggage for the outward journey. Put this only on the inside of your cases.
- Ask a neighbour to park a car on your driveway so that passers-by assume someone is at home.
- Finally, just before you actually set off it's worth allowing a quiet couple of minutes on the doorstep to check you've done all you had to do and taken everything you need with you.