

ALERTS

TRADING STANDARDS

24/08/2026

Avoiding rogue locksmiths

These are some of the signs to suggest a locksmith may be dodgy:

- **They offer super low prices** One of the most common locksmith scams involves bait and switch pricing, where you're quoted a low price that is inflated after the locksmith arrives at your home.
- **They show intimidating behaviour** Being forced to pay in a particular way, such as in cash, and being vague about prices or how to carry out a job is a red flag.
- **Calls aren't answered by a locksmith** The Master Locksmiths Association (MLA) reported that a third of locksmiths said the most important thing you should look for when selecting a locksmith is that your call is answered by a locksmith and not diverted to a call centre.

There are several steps you can take to avoid falling victim to rogue locksmiths:

- **Where possible leave spare keys with a trusted neighbour or nearby friend**, so if you lose your keys, you can still get in. Or install a key safe, somewhere out of view, so that you can securely keep a spare key accessible.
- **Identify a local locksmith in advance of needing one.** It's worth finding a reputable business before you need it, if possible – ask trusted friends for recommendations or look for established locksmiths with physical premises – and check whether they provide a regular daytime service or offer a 24-hour emergency service.

- **Try to avoid using an ‘emergency’ locksmith.** You would reasonably be charged more if you request a visit outside normal working hours. If the work can be delayed, you are less at risk of receiving an expensive bill.
- **DO NOT rely on stickers at the entrances to shared buildings.** Trading Standards officers have noticed it is a common practice for rogue locksmiths to use these, no doubt hoping that residents will believe the landlord or property manager has put it there to identify their ‘recommended’ trader. It is unlikely that an honest locksmith would seek business in this way.
- **Take the time to do some research,** if you need to appoint an emergency locksmith. The [Master Locksmiths Association](#) has guidance and information about the approach to problems that a skilled locksmith might take and the prices that they consider to be reasonable. A common practice of rogue locksmiths is to ‘drill’ the lock, destroying it completely, and making the victim even more vulnerable. It is very rare that a skilled locksmith would need to drill a lock.
- **Be clear about what you require and ask for a quotation first.** If you just want to get into your property after locking yourself out, this can usually be done without damaging the lock or the door. If you need new locks, be clear about what you need – either by sharing the insurance company’s requirements, or by researching different types of lock yourself.
- **Ask for the cost to be broken down** into call-out charge (if there is one) labour and parts. You should not be paying excessively for the cost of parts, but if you agree the price in advance, or pay without raising an objection immediately, it will be much harder to get your money back.
- **Ask to retain the packaging of any new part,** so you are clear what was fitted.
- **Do not pay the full amount unless it was agreed in advance; or the whole cost has been properly explained and is not excessive.** If no price was given, offer a ‘reasonable’ amount. If the trader refuses to accept this and leave, or is verbally or physically intimidating, call the Police. It is always best to try to ensure you deal with traders outside your home, where possible.

WHERE TO REPORT

Protect others by reporting incidents like this.

Report suspicious texts you have received but not acted upon, by forwarding the original message to 7726, which spells SPAM on your keypad.

Report suspicious emails you have received but not acted upon, by forwarding the original message to report@phishing.gov.uk

If you, or anyone you know, have been affected by this fraud or any other scam, report it to Report Fraud by calling 0300 123 2040 or visiting www.reportfraud.police.uk

tradingstandards@royalgreenwich.gov.uk