English version

How to prevent a break-in



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Keeping people safe
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What a break-in or housebreaking is

When someone breaks into your house or garden, it's sometimes called "breaking and entering" or "housebreaking". We'll always call it "housebreaking" when you speak to us.

Stealing does not always happen during a break-in or housebreaking. It's still a crime even if nothing is stolen.

When break-ins are more likely to happen

Although break-ins can happen at any time, it's more likely when a house looks empty. This includes:

- winter (houses look empty if the lights are off)
- during holidays
- when new build houses are finished (before anyone's moved in)

Housebreaking is also more likely during holidays because thieves know it's more likely that valuables will be inside. Such as:

- jewellery
- gifts
- money

What this booklet can help you with

You can take the steps in this booklet to help reduce the risk of:

- your house being a target
- a thief getting into your garden or house
- your money or valuables being stolen

This booklet has different ideas to help prevent a break-in. You can choose which to do based on your time and budget.

Ways to help prevent a break-in

Keep your garden secure

If it's hard for someone to break into your garden, it can stop them from trying to break into your house.

To help stop people getting into your garden, you can:

- make sure fences are not broken or rotten
- keep hedges and shrubs in front of your house 1 metre tall (so you can see in and out)
- keep hedges, walls, and fences 1.8 metres tall at the sides and back of your house (it's harder to climb in)
- keep wooden fence planks vertical and 1.8 metres tall (it's harder to climb)
- remove tree branches within 2.1 meters above the ground (so people cannot use them to climb into your garden)
- grow thorny plants at your fence and below windows
- make sure bins are not left where they can be used to climb over fences or into windows
- think about getting gravel or stones under your windows and driveway (so you can hear someone coming)
- make sure gates are not broken and can be locked in 2 different places



To keep buildings and valuables in your garden and driveway safe, you can:

- make sure outbuilding windows and doors work and can be locked
- shut and lock outbuildings windows and doors when you're not using them
- store tools, electronics, and garden valuables out of sight (locked away if you can)
- write or take a photo of serial numbers on any valuables
- mark expensive power tools with a DNA kit or UV pen
- insure your valuables with contents insurance
- use alarms and CCTV for outbuildings, garages, and driveways
- have your house name or number can be seen from the street (so emergency services can find your house easily)

To stop your garden looking empty and at risk of break-in, you should:

- regularly mow your lawn and trim any hedges
- not let your bin overflow
- not let rubbish or post pile up where it can be seen



Use alarms, CCTV, and security lights

There are many alarms, CCTV, and security lights at different prices, so you can choose the best one for your budget. Your insurance might be cheaper if you get alarms, CCTV, and security lights.

When buying alarms and CCTV, make sure:

- it meets British Standards (PD6662)
- the person or company setting it up has National Security Inspectorate (NSI) or Security System and Alarms Inspection Board (SSAIB) certifications

Alarms

When choosing an alarm, you can choose between:

- monitored: the alarm company tells you the alarm triggered before calling the police
- unmonitored: the alarm triggers but no-one is automatically told (you or a neighbour will have to see what happened and call the police)
- auto-dialler: you'll get a text or phone call if your alarm is triggered

You can also get:

- magnetic sensors that trigger an alarm if a door or window is opened
- glass break (vibration) sensors that trigger an alarm if your windows or any glass in your doors is broken
- get motion sensors (PIR sensors) near your windows and doors, these can come with or without a CCTV camera



CCTV

When choosing CCTV, you could get:

- a camera that films in high quality (for example, 4K)
- a camera that records 12 to 25 frames per second in original, uncompressed format
- cameras inside your house as well as outside

When using CCTV, you should:

- put the camera 3 metres above the ground (it's more likely to record faces and stops thieves from breaking the camera)
- put the camera somewhere where nothing blocks its view
- cut or move any plants that block the CCTV view
- put the camera where it can film all the ways into your house (such as doors, garages, driveways, windows)
- make sure your camera does not film areas that are not your property, or you blur areas that are not your property
- put signs up that say you use CCTV

Lights

When choosing security lights, you can:

- get dusk-to-dawn or timer-activated lights (they turn on automatically when it's dark and stay on until it's light)
- use LED bulbs (they're brighter and last longer than sodium bulbs)
- have a light near ways into your property and home (including any gardens, driveways, garages and doors)
- put the lights 3 metres above the ground (to stop thieves from breaking them)

Secure your windows and doors

To secure your windows and doors, you should:

- shut and lock your doors and windows at night, when you're not at home, and when you're not using them (including patio and garage doors)
- never leave keys in locks
- regularly check the frames, locks, and hinges are not broken
- repair them as soon as you can if they're broken (or tell your landlord or factor)

If you're buying new windows and doors, you should:

- buy ones certified by Secure by Design
- look for "PAS24" doors and windows because they're harder to break
- make sure any glass is laminated



Windows

To make your windows more secure, you can:

- add safety film or get a specialist to apply it (it makes it harder to break and makes more noise if broken)
- use ventilation locks, restrictors, or sash stops on open windows to stop someone opening them wide enough to climb through

Doors

To make sure your doors are secure, you should:

- never leave the door on the latch or held open
- avoid letting people inside a shared door if you do not know them
- make sure people do not follow you inside before the door shuts (this is called "tailgating")
- if someone tries to follow you inside you can challenge them (if you feel safe to)
- not let in contractors unless you confirm their identity and reason for entry
- think about keeping a personal alarm near your door that you can trigger if you feel worried about someone at your door
- never share codes for locks or alarms with delivery people
- never leave keys in easy to find places for contractors



To make your doors more secure, you can:

- hang a cup on your inside door handle so it will fall and smash if someone tries to open the door
- get a door handle alarm on the inside of your door that will trigger if someone tries to open the door
- use door chains, restrictors, peepholes, or a camera doorbell to see who's at your door without opening it fully
- use a security bar or a "patlock" on closed double doors to make it harder to break open
- add drop bolts to your doors to make them harder to break open
- change your locks to a "euro-cylinder barrel TS 007 3-star lock" or Sold Secure "Diamond Standard" lock (they're harder to break)
- change your door hardware such as the handle and escutcheons to ones that meet the Domestic Buildings Gold standard (they're harder to break)
- fit a letter box guard to stop someone reaching in to try and open the door
- add an anti-lift device onto any patio doors to stop someone removing them to break in
- install internal door handle lever locks to secure doors and restrict access into rooms



Thieves are less likely to break into your garden or house if they cannot see anything worth stealing or if they think valuables are hard to get to.

To help keep any valuables safe, you can:

- keep them out of sight
- keep any keys away from the doors leading outside, windows, and letterboxes
- consider getting a key safe that meets the Sold Secure gold standard (and keep it out of sight)
- keep contactless car keys or key fobs in a faraday pouch
- keep house keys and car keys on different keyrings
- avoid putting your address on your keys
- avoid telling other people what valuables you have
- avoid posting photos of your valuables on social media
- join your local Neighbourhood Watch and sign up for alerts
- after buying large expensive items break the boxes before putting them by your bin or take them to a recycling centre

How to prevent a break-in

To store your valuables safely, you can:

- keep large amounts of cash in a bank account (it's more secure and your money's protected up to £120,000)
- keep items such as jewellery, gold, and cash in a safety deposit vault registered with the Safe Deposit Federation
- think about investing your assets into more secure or harder to steal assets
- consider buying a safe
- consider installing a high-speed security fogging system, that instantly fills a room with dense, harmless vapor to blind intruders



Safes

If you buy or already have a safe, you can:

- look for one that's Sold Secure gold standard (BS EN 14450 S2)
- get an insurance and fire-rated safe for the type and value of items kept inside it
- have your safe installed by a vetted professional and get an installation certificate (your insurance might need this if you make a claim)
- make sure the safe is installed into the fabric of your home (such as beams or concrete)
- hide it somewhere a thief is less likely to look (safes are often in bedrooms and wardrobes)
- put vibration sensors or hidden motion sensors near the safe to trigger alarms if someone goes near it

Make it easier to return or replace valuables

To make it easier to return or replace any lost, damaged, or stolen items, you can:

- get contents insurance for the items and cash in your house
- make sure the insurance will pay for them if they're stolen
- take photos of your valuables
- write or take a photo of serial numbers on any valuables
- mark your valuables with a DNA marking kit
- use a UV pen to write your house number and postcode on your valuables (if you don't have a DNA marking kit)

Before leaving your house

Before you leave your house, you should:

- make sure all your doors and windows work
- shut and lock your doors and windows
- take the keys out of your locks and put them somewhere out of sight
- set any alarms you have
- lock valuables away or hide them out of sight

If you're leaving home for a few days

Thieves are less likely to break in if they do not know the house is empty.

To help it look like you're still at home, you can:

- make sure any camera doorbells are charged and has enough storage to record while you're away
- use any timers on your lights to turn them on and off
- cancel any deliveries due while you're away (for example, milk deliveries)
- use Royal Mail's Keepsafe service to stop your post going to your house
- mow the lawn before you leave
- avoid posting about the holiday or being away on social media

If you have someone you trust, you can also ask them to:

- check your house and garden
- open and close your curtains and turn lights on and off
- move your post out of sight
- put your bins out and put them back
- mow your lawn



Moving house

A new build home or moving into a new home can be more at risk of break-in.

This is because:

- they have new furniture and appliances no one has moved in yet
- construction or repair work can be a distraction and hide sounds
- the neighbours and routines are not known
- people often work on decorating and repairs before making the house secure

When you first move into a new home, try to:

- check all windows and doors work and lock
- get blinds or curtains so the house does not look empty
- follow the security steps in this booklet (as much as you can)
- ask the developers or managers to fix any issues you find (if you're in a new build)
- change your locks (if you want to)



Support for if you're worried about or have had a break-in

Police Scotland
You can ask us for more advice to help prevent break ins or about what to do if it happens.

Call **101** and ask to talk to a "Crime Prevention" or "Designing Out Crime Officer" (DOCO). You should also report anything unusual to us.

You can do this by:

- calling 101
- using the contact us form on our website

Crimestoppers
You can report crime anonymously to Crimestoppers by calling **0800 555 111**.

The Neighbourhood Watch
Join your local Neighbourhood Watch for:

- more advice on how to prevent crime
- local advice
- crime trends in your area

Secured by Design
Go to **securedbydesign.com** for more security advice.
They can also help you find police-approved products and services to help keep your home and valuables safe.

Sold Secure
Go to **soldsecure.com** to help you find police-approved products and services to help keep your home and valuables safe.

Master Locksmith's Association
The Master Locksmith's Association can help you find local locksmiths.

Locksmiths can:

- give you more information on lock standards
- tell you how to choose secure locks
- help change your locks or add new ones

Victim Support Scotland
Victim Support Scotland gives support and information to anyone affected by crime or has to go to court. You can call them using **0800 160 1985**.