A guide to avoid becoming a victim of burglary

Working for a safer Wycombe
While the risk of being a victim of burglary in the Wycombe District is low, it is important to take precautions to avoid becoming a victim of this type of crime.

1. **Use an intruder alarm**: This is a strong deterrent but should a burglar gain access, it’s likely to limit the amount of time they will spend inside.

2. **Use defensive planting**: Intruders don’t like climbing over and through prickly plants. It can cause injury and leave evidence such as torn clothing behind. Roses, Hawthorn and Holly are all suitable varieties.

3. **Lock up**: When you leave your home you should always lock doors and windows, even if you’re just popping out. However, it’s also worth doing when just out of the room or in the garden.

4. **Use gravel**: With gravel on your drive or path you’ll be increasing the chance of hearing someone approaching the house. Methods that raise your attention are a good preventative technique as burglars want to draw as little attention as possible.

5. **Key values**: Never leave your keys under the plant pot, door mat, or somewhere obvious and accessible. Leave a spare with family, friends or a trusted neighbour instead.

6. **Turn the lights on**: Lighting activated by sensors will come on when movement is detected. It can be enough to deter a thief.

7. **Lock your garage**: Make sure a suitable lock is fitted and a shed alarm or similar is installed. Less than 1% of vehicle thefts are from a garage, so clear out the junk and start using it again!

8. **Secure your outbuildings**: A shed can be a target as it’s often home to expensive tools and equipment. Use a padlock, tamperproof screws in hinges, and fit a blind or mesh to prevent people looking inside.

9. **Fence them off**: Having a good strong fence of reasonable height will help deter intruders, but ensure that the support beams are internally facing to avoid them being used to climb on. Keep the fence in good condition and a trellis on top can make it difficult to climb over.

10. **Keep tools out of sight and securely stored**: An opportunist burglar may work with whatever can be found at the property. Leaving a ladder outside offers an easy opportunity, and garden tools can be used to smash windows and gain access to your home. Remember to security mark them too.

11. **Make your mark**: Security mark your valuables with a UV pen or other forensic marking methods such as Selecta DNA or Smartwater.

12. **Out of sight**: Don’t keep valuable items in full view of windows or doors – for example, do not keep expensive visual and audio equipment by the window where passers-by can see it.

13. **KEYP Safe**: Keep your house and car keys out of view and in a secure place. Never leave them in the door or where they can be easily reached by intruders. Ensure other members of your household know where the keys are kept in case of an emergency.

14. **Anybody home?**: Most burglars only target empty homes. Use a timer switch to leave a light on during the darker hours.

For further information or advice, please visit: www.wycombe.gov.uk/communitysafety or call Wycombe District Council’s Community Safety Team on 01494 421117. Alternatively, if you would like to speak with a member of your local neighbourhood policing team please call the Thames Valley Police Non-Emergency telephone number 101.
Front of the house

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