

# Home Security Assessment Guidelines

## EXTERNAL SECURITY

### 1. Perimeter Security

#### **Good security walls or fences can keep out intruders:**

Either a wall or a good security fence can keep out intruders. They should be at least 1800mm (1.8m) high, and where it adjoins public areas should have a 300mm (30cm) trellis above. A lockable gate to the same height of the fence should be in place at the front elevation. The trellising should be strong enough to support climbing plants, but too weak to support the weight of a human.

### 2. Landscaping

#### **Landscaping to the front and rear garden should be kept to a minimum:**

Landscaping to the front and rear garden should be kept to a minimum to avoid potential cover for offenders and so as not to obstruct views. Hedges, shrubs and walls in the front garden should be no higher than 3ft in order to avoid giving a burglar a screen behind which they can conceal themselves. Thorny bushes can be planted on the perimeter and below ground floor windows to deter burglars. The use of gravel on paths or driveway prevents a silent approach, and can alert the occupier to someone's presence.

### 3. Garages and Sheds

#### **Fit strong padlocks to sheds and garage doors:**

Garages and sheds are targeted as an easy option, fit strong padlocks and or shed bars to shed and garage doors. Alternatively, alarms can be fitted to both, and can even be wired into any existing house alarm. Remember that leaving garden tools lying around makes the burglar's life easy. They should always be locked away securely in a shed or garage. Consideration should be made to securing ladders by means of a chain or padlock to a strong post or wall. (Also refer to external lighting section 18).

### 4. Locks

#### **Mortice locks**

Mortice locks are embedded into the door and can only be opened with the key. This makes them much more secure than a cylinder rim lock (such as a Yale lock).

The Home Office recommends fitting five-lever mortice deadlocks. The higher the number of levers, the more secure the door because the lock is more difficult to pick. More levers means more key variations, which makes it much harder to make duplicate keys.

Always make sure you purchase a mortice lock which displays the BS3621 kitemark.

#### **Types of mortice lock**

**Deadlock** - A deadlock consists of just a keyhole and a bolt.

**Sashlock** - A sashlock has a bolt and a latch, and a pair of handles.

For further advice consult a locksmith who is a member of the Master Locksmith Association.

## 5. **Doors**

- All doors which are used as the final point of exit from your property should be fitted with a lock which conforms to BS 3621 or the new BS EN 12209, which covers both security and performance standards.
- Doors made of materials other than timber must have passed the British Board of Agreement (BBA) security test for doors.
- Use laminated glass in all glazed areas to make it harder to smash.
- Front doors should have a viewer (peephole) and door chain to keep out unwanted visitors.
- Hinges should be securely fastened to the doorframe and must be able to take the weight of the door.
- Doors that open outwards exposing the hinges should have hinge bolts fitted to prevent burglars slipping out the hinge pin and removing the door.

### **Timber doors**

Timber doors should have a solid core, be at least 44mm thick and comply with BS 8220. Wooden doors should have two locks: a five-lever mortice lock (which conforms to BS 3621) and a cylinder rim lock (which can be double locked from inside with a key).

### **Patio doors**

- Most modern patio doors will incorporate a multi-point locking system. Older doors, without a multi-point locks, should be fitted with special patio door locks to the top and bottom of the sliding door.
- Patio doors should be fitted with toughened glass to prevent burglars smashing them easily.
- Another important feature is an anti-lift device to prevent the sliding door being lifted off its runners. This can be either a bar in the top channel or locks positioned so that the door cannot be lifted.

## 6. **Front – door viewer**

**Door viewers help see who is outside before opening the door:**

Door viewers help people see who is at the front door before they open it. They are especially useful for vulnerable groups such as the elderly.

### **Front – door chain**

## 7. **Fit a front door chain and use it:**

Door chains prevent the door being opened fully. They are relatively cheap and easy to install and if the property doesn't have one, it is recommended you fit one. Remember that you should only use the door chain or bar when answering the door, do not leave it on all the time. Home Office "Lock, Stop, Chain, Check". Further information can be found on page 25.

## Letter box restrictor

### 8. **Prevent thieves opening locks from the inside:**

Spare keys should never be hung inside the letter box as this is an obvious place that a thief will check. Neither should any keys, particularly car keys be within easy reach of the letterbox. Remember, offenders try to steal easily accessible car keys by the use of a magnet on a stick, or a hook and cane through the letterbox.

Letter boxes should be at least 400mm (16 inches) from any locks. Consideration should be given to fitting a letter box cage or other restrictor, which prevents thieves from outing their hands through the letterbox and trying the latch from the inside.

## WINDOWS

### 14. **Window locks on all windows – all windows should have locks. The best locks are not connected to window catches:**

The best locks are casement locks and make it harder to open windows with the correct key. Alternatively those that are independent of the handle or catch should be used as these give more strength to the frame. If thieves can see window locks it may put them off, because they would have to break the glass and risk attracting attention. If your home has, or you are intending to use the type of lock that screws to the window, the following test is a good guide to help decide how many are required. With the window closed, press each opening corner. If there is any movement, fit a suitable lock, such as a push lock, at each corner on the opening side. If there is no movement a lock fitted to the centre of the opening frame will suffice.

### 15. **Louvre windows – replace with fixed glass or glue the slats in place or fit special locks:**

These windows are made up of horizontal strips of glass, which can be pulled out from the window very easily. These windows are particularly vulnerable to attack. You should replace these with fixed glass, alternatively use strong glue or special locks to keep in place.

### 16. **French windows**

#### **Mortise bolts should be fitted to both doors:**

French windows are often used as a means of escape because they are fitted with slide bolts, which if released allow both doors to open. Fitting mortise bolts to the top and bottom of the doors can prevent these being opened from the outside. Provision should be made to prevent an attack to the hinges. It is recommended to consider replacing ordinary or toughened glass panels with laminated glass, as it offers much greater resistance to attack.

## LIGHTING

### 17. **All external doors and other vulnerable areas covered by lighting?**

Has the property got lights by all external doors and vulnerable areas such as rear garden, garages, sheds, corridors to flats and maisonettes? This is especially important in the dark, helping people to see that no one is waiting for them as they leave or enter their homes. Dawn to dusk lights are another

good deterrent, coming on as it starts to get dark, these lights are inexpensive to run.

**18. External lighting**

**Good external lighting can deter burglars:**

This lighting falls into two categories. High wattage tungsten floodlighting triggered by an infra red beam, giving a harsh white light or low wattage fluorescent light that comes on from dusk till dawn and gives gentle light. These lights both provide acceptable security lighting, although the second is less expensive to run. Light activation has a greater deterrent value if there is someone nearby to notice it and take action. It also may put an element of doubt in the mind of the burglar as to whether they have been spotted.

**19. Internal timers**

**Invest in some plug in timers:**

Lamps and radios can be plugged into an internal timer plug and be set to come on at a certain time giving impression that someone is at home. A lamp can be set to come on at dusk and more than one timer can be set with lights, radios etc. coming on and off around the house. These devices are extremely effective, they are cheap to run and can be bought from numerous DIY chains and other high street retailers.

**ALARMS**

**20. Burglar Alarm**

**A burglar alarm is a deterrent:**

Alarms can act as a visual deterrent, many burglars will avoid breaking into a property with an alarm. If there is one, is it used? There are two main types of alarm. The first type is an audible bell/siren alarm that sounds a bell or siren when activated. Ideally there should be alarm/bell or siren when activated. Ideally there should be alarm/bell boxes front and back of the premises. This type of alarm is reliant on the response of good neighbours, or the householder being at home, but asleep. Due to the huge number of false alarms, the police will normally only respond to these activations if there is confirmation of suspicious activity.

The second type is a monitored alarm, which sends a signal to a 24 hour monitoring station. False activations can be checked prior to calling the police. Remember to always set the alarm when leaving the premises unoccupied - even for a short period.

**21. Alarm activated when going to bed**

**Use your alarm when going to bed:**

Many people think that if they are at home and going to bed there is no need to set the alarm. This is not the case, if your alarm can be set to cover zoned areas set the alarm downstairs when going to bed, burglars will consider breaking into homes overnight, because they know that some householders do not set the alarm when going to bed.

**22. Smoke alarms**

**For a free home fire safety check by Cheshire Fire Service:**

Every house should have at least one smoke alarm, preferably two, which should be tested regularly. Cheshire Fire Service can provide home fire safety checks, including survey and installation of smoke alarms, all free of charge. For further advice, the householder can ring Cheshire Fire Service on 01606 868700.

**23. Garage/shed alarm**

**These can be connected to the house alarm:**

Garages and sheds are targeted as an easy option by criminals. In addition to fitting external physical security to sheds and garages, consider the installation of an alarm. Alarms can be fitted to both garages and sheds and can even be wired into any existing house alarm. There are also various stand-alone devices specifically designed for remote use on garages and sheds, which fall into two categories.

- i) Passive infra-red detector within the shed to detect movement and body heat.
- ii) A door contact system

Both systems will operate a siren or bell if the shed is accessed with the correct deactivation. They are available with battery or mains power supply and can be purchased from locksmiths, DIY stores or other high street retailers.

**GOOD HOUSEKEEPING**

**24. All keys out of sight**

**Thieves can hook keys through letter boxes:**

Keep all house and car keys out of sight and away from doors.

## Home Security Assessment

The information and advice given during the home security assessment is provided free of charge and without the intention of creating a contract. Neither the assessor nor the organisation the assessor is employed with take any legal responsibility for the advice given. This assessment can only give a view on what measures may reduce the risk of crime and there can be no guarantee that the measures will prevent crime.

To complete this Home Security Assessment read the contents of the corresponding paragraph i.e. Perimeter Security. If you feel your property's security reaches the minimum, please tick YES. Alternatively, if not please tick NO. If not applicable i.e. you have no patio doors, please tick YES. Upon completion it is recommended that you take action to upgrade the security of your home to the minimum standard for all of these areas you have ticked NO.

### EXTERNAL SECURITY

- |    |                     |     |                          |    |                          |   |                          |
|----|---------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 1. | Perimeter Security? | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> | - Good security fences can keep out intruders           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. | Landscaping         | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> | - Landscaping to front and rear to be kept to a minimum | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. | Garages and Sheds   | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> | - Fit strong padlocks to sheds and garage doors         | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### MAIN FRONT/REAR DOORS

- |    |                         |     |                          |    |                          |  |                          |
|----|-------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| 4. | UPVC Front door?        | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> | - BBA compliant; if glazed laminated glass                             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. | Front – solid core?     | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> | - Solid doors are preferred, the doors should be as strong as the lock | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. | Frame – good condition? | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> | - The frame should be as strong as the door                            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. | Front – door viewer?    | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> | - Door viewers help to see who is outside before opening the door      | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- |     |                               |     |                          |    |                          |   |                          |
|-----|-------------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 7.  | Front – door chain?           | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> | - Fit a front door chain and use it                         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9.  | Front – 5 lever mortise lock? | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> | - The lock should be at least a 5 lever mortise lock BS3621 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. | Letterbox restrictor          | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> | - Prevents thieves opening locks from the inside            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. | UPVC Back door?               | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> | - BBA compliant; if glazed laminated glass                  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. | Back – solid core?            | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> | - All external doors should be solid                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. | Frame – good condition?       | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> | - The frame should be as strong as the door                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. | Back – 5 lever mortise lock?  | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> | - The lock should be at least a 5 lever mortise lock BS3621 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. | Patio doors – sliding bolts?  | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> | - These bolts stop the doors being lifted off the rails     | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## WINDOWS

- |     |                              |     |                          |    |                          |  |                          |
|-----|------------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| 16. | Window locks on all windows? | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> | - The best locks are not connected to the window catches                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17. | Louvre windows?              | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> | - Replace with fixed glass or glue the slats in place or fit special locks | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18. | French windows?              | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> | - Mortise bolts should be fitted to both doors                             | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## LIGHTING

- |     |  |     |                          |    |                          |   |                          |
|-----|--|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 19. | All external doors and vulnerable areas? | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> | - Are all vulnerable areas and doors covered by lighting? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20. | External lighting?                       | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> | - Good external lighting can deter burglars               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21. | Internal timers?                         | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> | - Invest in some plug in timers                           | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## ALARMS

22. Burglar alarm? Yes  No  - A burglar alarm is a deterrent
23. Alarm activated when going to bed? Yes  No  - Use your alarm when going to bed
24. Smoke alarm? Yes  No  - For a free home fire safety check see page 42
25. Garage/Shed alarm? Yes  No  - These can be connected to the house alarm

## GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

26. All keys out of sight? Yes  No  - Intruders can hook keys through your letter box
27. Keep all valuables out of sight? Yes  No  - Keep all valuables out of sight when you go to bed