



**POLICE  
SCOTLAND**

Keeping people safe

**POILEAS ALBA**



# Housebreaking Advice

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Housebreaking to domestic properties can be a traumatic experience for the victim. Police Scotland are pro-actively targeting criminals who carry out these crimes. Although Housebreaking can occur at any time of the year, seasonal issues should be taken into consideration. During the winter months, houses can give the appearance of being empty due to lack of lights etc.

Other seasonal considerations are Chinese New year, and religious festivals such as Ramadan/Eid. Homes occupied by families celebrating such festivals can be particularly vulnerable and are often targeted by criminals, who will seek to acquire gold/jewellery/foreign currency stored within.

The risk in all circumstances can be greatly reduced with the use of Crime Prevention measures, they will greatly reduce both the chances of your home becoming a target and the payoff to any person(s) responsible, as outlined below.

## **Personal Safe/Security Boxes**

The most important message we can give is not to keep valuables at home if possible, particularly gold/jewellery/currency, as it is known that bedrooms and lofts are routinely searched during the commission of this type of crime, particularly if the occupants are celebrating a cultural festival.

If a storage facility can be provided by your bank or building society then this is the best option. There are private companies who offer similar services. If this option is unavailable an insurance rated safe should be considered comparable with or greater than the value of the contents. Safes should be installed as per the manufacturer's guidelines and securely attached to the fabric of the building, not to a plasterboard wall, for example. Ideally have an insurance approved installer fit a safe in your home.

## **Alarm Systems**

An approved monitored alarm system is recommended as an audible only alarm does not always guarantee police attendance. An audible only alarm, however, is still an effective visual deterrent. All alarm systems must be kept in good order to remain effective. If investing in an alarm system, look for companies that are linked to accredited bodies such as National Security Inspectorate (NSI or formerly NACOSS) or Security Systems and Alarms Inspection Board (SSAIB) and all alarm systems should comply with British Standards PD6662.

## **Lighting**

Good lighting around the outside your home is an important security feature, we recommend detector lighting which will draw attention to persons being illuminated that can be seen by neighbouring properties/passers-by. This increases the opportunity of criminals being seen around your home or garden. If you already have existing lighting make sure it is working properly and change any faulty lightbulbs.

## **Windows/Doors**

Many people focus on securing their front doors and forget about their windows and secondary doors in their homes. Do not leave any opportunity for a thief to enter. Always remove the key from a lock, particularly where there is glazing nearby. If considering new windows and or doors consider purchasing products tested to 'Secured by Design' accreditation or PAS 024 2016. All glazing within doors or immediately adjacent to doors should have at least one pane (inner or outer) fitted with laminated glass to P1A standard. Alternatively a less expensive method of increasing glazing security is by installing security window film, various options can be found online.

## **Internal Lighting**

Proper use of timer switches for your home gives the impression that someone is at home. Consider placing timers in different rooms which activate at different times to add to the impression that someone is home. Leaving a radio on or buying a TV simulator light also adds to the impression that someone is at home.

## **General Maintenance**

Never leave tools or items that can be used by a thief to break a window, or gain entry through a door, lying around the garden. Ensure shed security is to an appropriate level as thieves will often target these first. Keep garden planting well maintained as if overgrown, it could prevent neighbours seeing into your garden, allowing the thief to go about their business unseen.

## **Social Media**

Carefully consider what you are putting on social media, especially if you are going on holiday or attending weddings, functions or posting pictures with jewellery on full show. Your phone and social media accounts should be set to friends only and ensure that your GPS location is switched off.

## **Unusual Activity**

Report any unusual activity to Police, either by phone (101) in person or at a police office i.e. people offering work in the area, cards being posted through the door offering to carry out work. Criminals can use this as a method of identifying potential targets and by reporting this information to the police, it may help us identify groups or individuals who may be involved.

## CCTV

Can be an expensive security measure and consideration must be given to compliance with Data Protection legislation. Domestic CCTV does not need to be registered with the Information Commissioners Office. Always seek advice from an approved supplier before installing a system. There are various other options available.

## Property Marking/Insurance

Consider property marking items with either an ultra violet pen (House number and Post Code) or other property making products (see below link to Secured By Design Website).

Check you have adequate insurance coverage for valuable items and every year or two ensure that you check with your insurer that cover still protects the amount of your valuables. Photograph and keep an inventory of your valuables as a record for yourself and to assist in any insurance claim. Smaller items such as jewellery should be photographed next to a ruler to give scale. This will assist police in identifying any items recovered.

[www.securedbydesign.com](http://www.securedbydesign.com) is a not for profit organisation. On the website you will find links to Police approved products and companies which will provide solutions to all the measures mentioned in this leaflet. Should you wish to discuss options or seek further advice with/from a Crime Prevention trained Designing Out Crime Officer please contact 101 to arrange.

Police emergency: **101**  
Police non-emergency: **999**  
[www.scotland.police.uk](http://www.scotland.police.uk)

Trading Standards: **03454040506**  
Crime Stoppers: **0800 555111**



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