

YOUR FREE POCKET GUIDE

TOWN & COUNTRY
Security Systems Ltd

CELEBRATING
30
YEARS
IN SECURITY



All YOU need to know to secure YOUR HOME

brought to you by
Town & Country Security Systems Ltd



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Congratulations on receiving this

FREE Pocket Guide

to help spot the weaknesses in your home security.

*As seen
through the
eyes of an
Ex-Offender*

“ At Town & Country Security Systems Ltd, we are always looking for better ways to secure your property, giving you added peace of mind when you are home or away, and think this guide will be of particular interest to you.

We are a local, family run company who pride ourselves on exceptionally high standards of workmanship and customer care.

Set up in 1983, we are celebrating our 30th year in security with over 4000 alarm systems installed.

If you or anyone you know is considering installing an Intruder alarm system in your property, then Town & Country Security should be your first choice every time. ”

James Price, Owner.

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How Secure is Your Home?

When considering how best to make your home secure you need to assume the mindset of a burglar. This article was researched and supplied by Thames Valley Police using information from an ex-offender.

A burglar will look for any signs of weakness in your home. They will make a balance between the risk of getting caught against the potential gains to be had. You need to consider what is called **target hardening**.

This is making your property a less attractive proposition to them so that they consider the risk of targeting your property too great to take.

Anyone can do a self-assessment of his or her home. It is good idea to take the time to do so before you go away. Put it on your pre-holiday to do list. Here is a simple guide of what to look for and some questions to ask yourself.

Start outside. Look at the front aspect of your home. If the front looks weak to a burglar then they will expect the back to be easy for them too.

The Front Gate

is the first psychological barrier to keeping a burglar away.

- Is it kept closed?
- Is it in good repair? If not then a burglar may believe that your door and window frames might be badly maintained too, making them easy to force.
- Will the gate make a noise opening or self-closing shut? If it creaks or slams shut behind an intruder, then neighbours may be alerted to the fact that a burglary is in progress.

The Driveway

will need to be crossed to get to the doors and windows.

- Is it gravel covered, which is noisy to walk on?
- Is there a car on the drive? If you are away from home the car needn't be yours. Allow a trusted neighbour to park on your drive so it looks like you are not away.
- Will an outside light come on as I approach the house?

The Front Perimeter

needs to have a physical barrier to define where your property starts.

- Are the front hedges and fences low, allowing visibility of the house? Will people see me if I am tampering with your front door or windows?

Front Door

- Do you just have one single cylinder lock on the door? If so then it is quite easy to breach and it would be a good idea to fit a secondary lock.
- When you are at home, is there a door chain on the inside, or a spy hole so you can see who is at the door outside? Is the entrance well lit?

Intruder Alarms

are one of the first deterrents to be noticed by burglars.

- Do you have an alarm box on the front of your house?
- Does the alarm work?
- Is it properly maintained?

- **ALWAYS SET YOUR ALARM** even if you are out for only a short while, as a screeching alarm will alert the neighbourhood and deter any burglar.

Windows

- Have you left any windows open? An open small fan light type window can be enough to reach in through to the handle of the main window, to pass a small child inside or put a wire through to lift the latch on a bigger window.
- Can I see straight in or are there curtains or blinds?
- Can I see valuables on open display?
- Are there valuables on window sills or close to doors within easy reach upon entry?
- Are the windows locked?

Signs in your Windows

may not be a good idea. 'Beware of the dog' or 'I love cats' advertises that you are less likely to have a burglar alarm or if you do then you may not have set it. Also that you may have left doors or windows open for access by pets. Many dogs are quite docile and the mere presence of one will not put off a determined burglar.

Bins

It is bin day and everyone else's bin has been put out for collection apart from yours? Does that mean that you are not there? Could you get someone to do the bins for you in your absence?

Lights

Are there any lights on inside the property? It is good to leave a light on a timer switch when you are out. Even the light from a fish tank can be a deterrent.

Side Gates

I'm less likely to be seen at the rear of your house and that gives me more time to get inside.

- Is there a side gate?
- Can I get over or through it easily?
- Is it kept locked?

Cameras

- Does the house have CCTV cameras?
- Do the cameras work?
- Are they properly maintained?

Porches, Garages and other Low Roofs

Are there wheelie bins, water butts, drain pipes or similar close to low roofs? These are easy to climb on and once on the roof can I reach the windows?

Now take a good look at the back of your home

Ladders

are useful for me to access windows and flat roofs. Not only yours but your neighbours too.

- Have any ladders been left outside unsecured or have they been put inside or chained / locked to a tree or similar?

Fences and Rear Perimeters

Burglars often garden hop to make good their escape.

- Are the fences high?
- What will I land on when I climb the fence?
- Is there trellis, anti climb paint or spikes along the top?
- Are there prickly plants along the boundaries?

Sheds and Out Buildings

are loved by burglars for a number of reasons. They may contain bikes and tools I can steal, or tools I can use to break into the house.

- Is the shed locked?
- Do the shed windows have bars behind them so that I can't remove the glass and climb in?
- Is the door HASP fixed with anti-theft screws or can I remove it easily with a standard screwdriver?
- Are there expensive bikes and tools on view?
- Are they locked or chained up? They may be in a shed but once I'm past the door I can use an unsecured bike to make my escape.
- Are there unsecured tools which I could use to break into a house with? I might steal your tools and break into some else's house – that could prove a bit embarrassing for you.

Side and Back Doors

- Have you left a key in the lock on the inside enabling me to smash the glass and unlock the door?

Patio Doors

- How old are they? Most modern ones have multiple locking points whilst older ones are less secure.

Finally, what should you consider in case I do get in?

Car Keys and Handbags

- Did you take them upstairs at bedtime or are they nice and handy for me to grab from the hall or kitchen?

Calendar

Have you gone away or are at work leaving dates and times on display? If I do get into your house a calendar on the wall can often give me a good indication of how long I've got until you are due to come home?

Valuables

Small items are very desirable to burglars. They are easy to secrete easy to carry, can be quite saleable and are easy to pass on.

- Do you have a safe?
- Are your belongings property marked with Smartwater, UV pen or similar?

- Is your jewellery and personal documentation kept in a location that is not obvious?
- Do you have photographs, serial numbers or receipts for your valuables?
- And are they kept hidden in a fireproof tin box in a hidden location?

Other considerations

- Are you sufficiently insured? With the recent increase in value of precious metals, some victims are finding out they are not.

So as you can see there is a lot to consider. All of the above may deter a burglar, much of it you will probably have done already and some of it is common sense. But even if you take on board one bullet point from the above it will be one more step to lessening the chances of you becoming the next burglary victim. As the old adage goes...

...better to be safe than sorry.

