

“Warm Night” - Some Crime Prevention advice for the home

In days old when Knights were bold as nighttimes approached, at the castle the draw bridge was raised and the portcullis dropped, the sentry stationed at the gate would not let anyone in unchallenged. Now whilst the drawbridge and portcullis would be a bit over the top, at the average home there are a few simple things you can do on these hot summers nights to prevent you from becoming a victim of crime.

First line of defence, where possible prevent an intruder from getting to the rear of your property (most burglary point of entries occur at the rear of the property) with a 6' fence and gate, consider a spiky topping (perfectly legal but must have a warning sign displayed), and make sure it is closed and locked especially at night.

If you have unoccupied rooms that can be accessed from outside make sure the windows are closed, if you need ventilation in these rooms at least lock the larger window and only have the small window open, even during the daytime.

Leave a door or patio door open and in comes trouble, even during the day if that door is accessible the sneak thief will pop in and anything laying around will be gone, you may have only popped down the end of the garden or having a quick shower upstairs, it only takes a second.

Before you turn in for the night do the “rounds” some may think it is a bit over the top, but you will feel more confident and not become a victim of “the one time I forgot to shut the window.....” Check the simple things:-

1. Cars on the drive? – are the windows shut and doors locked (don't assume that by pressing the button on the remote it is locked, try the handle too)? It is worth parking the least expensive car in front of the more expensive one.
2. Side gate shut and locked, sheds and garages secure?
3. Doors closed and locked, don't forget on that UPVC multi-locking door you may have lifted the handle but until you turn the key on the inside you have not locked them all the locks in place.
4. Don't forget to check that patio door, someone may have closed it but did they lock it?
5. Windows, lift the blinds or open the curtains and check them, the sun may have been on the TV so they were drawn with the window open because it was hot. Ensure all accessible windows are closed and locked, if you live in a bungalow or have flat roofs, in unoccupied rooms keep them closed and locked but if you need a window open for ventilation in occupied rooms as above lock the big window and just have the small one open. If you only have bigger windows consider a lockable window restrictor or a small alarm sensor on the window to detect entry.
6. Check unnecessary appliances are turned off, and **make sure in case of fire that keys are readily accessible to occupants** but not in view of possible burglars.
7. If you have an alarm activate the zone for the unoccupied area.
8. Car keys, don't take them to bed with you, where possible leave them in noisy drawer/location.

9. If you do hear a suspicious noise in the house that you are not happy with dial 999, if you have an intruder remember your life is more important than your property, but do get a good description and if possible car index number.

Last bit of advice, going on holiday? Stop the milk and newspaper deliveries and look after each other, get a neighbour and/or friend to keep an eye on your property, ensure neighbours have contact numbers for a key holder and where possible let me park their car on your drive. Basically if you create the illusion that your house is occupied it is less likely to be broken into.

If would like Crime Reduction advice please don't hesitate to contact me via the non-emergency telephone number 0300 333 4444 or look at the Essex Police website for more general advice.

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