



NEWS BULLETIN

December 12, 2006

Stay on your guard against burglars this Christmas

The Safer Guildford Partnership is reminding residents to be on their guard against burglars this Christmas.

Although Guildford is one of the safest boroughs in the county, it is still worth taking a few simple precautions to avoid falling victim to opportunist thieves.

Crime Reduction Advisor for Guildford PC Graeme Ingate said: "It is important for people to be particularly vigilant at this time of year, particularly at home. Please follow this practical crime prevention advice and reduce the likelihood of becoming a victim of crime this Christmas."

- Store large Christmas gifts securely. Garden sheds and garages might be handy for storing that shiny new bicycle but leaving them unlocked or easy to break into is an open invitation to burglars. Make sure your shed or garage has strong locks on the windows and doors. Hanging thick curtains on the windows helps obscure valuable items. Don't make it easy for would-be thieves to have access to ladders and tools, which they can then use to break into your house.
- Put Christmas gifts out at the very last minute. Piling presents under the tree is a great way to advertise to opportunist thieves.
- Lock away valuable goods that are hard to replace over the festive period like cash, credit cards, passports, jewellery, cameras, etc.
- Permanently marking valuables with a UV marker with your postcode and house number helps safeguard them in future. Marker pens are available from your local police station and using them could help get your possessions back if they're stolen. Another good idea is to keep photographs of your jewellery or antiques and a short written description noting any unusual details.

- Give your home a Christmas present. A British Standard deadlocking rimlock and 5-lever mortice lock should be your minimum. If not, fit new ones. Add a security chain and a door viewer if you can – invaluable for screening unwanted callers.
- Stay alert to strangers in your street. If you see anyone suspicious or spot a car hanging around which you don't recognise, make a note of the details and description and contact the police. It may prevent a burglary in your neighbourhood.
- After Christmas, don't advertise your new goodies. Leaving large computer, TV, video and appliance boxes outside for rubbish collection is a great way of letting everyone – including thieves – know what you've got in the house. So carefully dispose of packaging by tearing up boxes and putting the pieces in sealed bin liners or recycle it.
- Never let a stranger into the house unless you are satisfied with their identification. If you're still not sure, feel free to ring and check with their employers. Keep an eye on your elderly neighbours over the Christmas period and report any suspicious callers to the police.

Spending Christmas away from home? Then follow these precautions:

- Activate your alarm when you go away. Don't forget to tell key holders how you can be contacted in an emergency. Consider signing up to the Surpol key holder database. (www.surpol.co.uk)
- Leave some of your interior lights on timers so it looks like someone is at home. You might also consider leaving a radio playing. Signs of occupation help deter intruders.
- Cancel regular deliveries like newspapers and milk. Ask a neighbour to keep an eye on your house and check your mailbox frequently so any letters and leaflets are pushed through.
- Notify a member of your Neighbourhood Watch so they can keep an extra eye out on your home.

If you have any queries or would like further information, please contact:

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