

GARDEN AND SHED SECURITY:-

Remember, that if a thief has the opportunity to take as much time as he wants and make as much noise as he wants with little chance of being disturbed, (especially in isolated locations) then he may well be able to overcome what ever security you have installed.

Wooden shed as are generally not strong enough to store high value items and you should seek alternative storage for them.

The more variety of measures and the more layers of security you can provide will help deter or delay him and make him more vulnerable to being disturbed and increase the chances of being caught.

To protect your shed as much as possible you should also consider the security provided by the surroundings in which it is located. Fit trellis to wooden fencing and consider spiky plants to deter climbing or fill gaps. (You may need to check with your local authority regarding local planning laws when extending the height of your fencing).

GARDEN GATES

- Unrestricted driveway access to your garden or an unlocked gate at the side of the house is a favourite and easy method for a thief to get into the rear of your property where he may be able to work unobserved.
- Fit a hasp or bolt and padlock to the side gate. Make sure the gate and gatepost are not rotten and are located firmly in the ground so that they do move and cannot be levered apart.
This not only helps prevent entry. It also makes it more difficult to depart with your garden equipment.
- Make sure your gates cannot be climbed over easily by topping with trellis or increasing their height. An alternative method is to fix strips of plastic wall spikes on top and which also come with warning signage. Check your gates will not lift of their hinge pins.
- To ensure smaller hinges cannot be easily unscrewed, drill out the top of the groove or use dome headed coach bolts or one way clutch screws. It is no good locking the gate securely one side when it could be removed by attacking insecure hinges on the other.

GARDEN IMPLEMENTS

- There is usually something a thief can find to use to break into your house or your neighbours house whilst you and they are out at work or way from the building. Smaller hand held tools such as Spades, crowbars, hammers, screwdrivers and chisels left in an insecure shed all save the trouble of carrying an instrument around , and which would increase the thieves likelihood of being caught.

If you leave tools lying out in the garden, it is even easier for the thief. Loose bricks and building materials are also very handy for breaking windows.

- If gardens tools are valuable to you, then consider post coding them or marking them to make them easily identifiable to you, and less attractive to the thief. Lock them securely away when not in use
- Larger tools such as motor mowers, quad bikes and ride on mowers need immobilising, and locking away out of sight and in a secure building or shed if possible. Chaining them to an immovable object or preventing them from being

removed from an area by other perimeter security measures may be enough to deter or frustrate the efforts of a thief.

- Portable tools electrical tools such as angle grinders, drills and power saws are a favourite item to steal. Petrol strimmers and hedge cutters another.

SHEDS AND OUT BUILDINGS

- Sheds are not designed for secure storage. Do not leave valuables in them. If you cannot avoid doing so you should take adequate security measures.
- Ensure the shed is sound and repair or replace any damaged or decaying panels.
- Chain and padlock together the more expensive items. It is much more difficult for a thief trying to remove a mower and bike chained together. Even more so if the chain is also padlocked or secured to the concrete floor, other suitable immovable object or ground anchor.
- Prevent unauthorised access to your garden shed by fitting a good closed shackle padlock and hasp and staple.
Make sure the fittings are reinforced on the inside of the shed so they cannot be pulled out especially if the wooden frame is weak. Reinforce the frame if necessary.
- Use smooth headed coach bolts or burr the tops of screws so they cannot be undone. Try not to leave large gaps where a lever could be forced in between, to prize the lock or hasp away from the frame. 'One way, clutch head' screws which can be tightened but not unscrewed are also available.
- Alternatives are 'shed bars' which fit completely across the shed door and lock to the door frame on either side. (Look for Sold Secure and Secure by Design products)
- Battery operated shed alarms are readily available and not expensive in comparison to the value of what might be stolen. Newer versions can come with a system for sending a text message to you when activated.
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- If the contents of your shed are very high and there are no other options for storage, then consider a mains powered burglar alarm system.
- For buildings within the grounds of your property consider installing or extending the house burglar alarm. If your property is remote, a burglar alarm with an auto dial which can phone you when it activates, may be a preferred option to a 'bells only' system relying on neighbours to hear it.
- Prevent the thief from seeing inside the building. Covering shed windows with a curtain or whitewash can act as a deterrent. What the thief can't see he may not be bothered with. If the risk is high, consider a heavy metal mesh or polycarbonate sheeting on the inside of the window securely fitted.

FENCES AND HEDGES

- Check the state of your garden fences. Carry out repairs after the winter. Consider topping close boarded wooden fencing with trellis. Grow spiky or prickly plants such as climbing roses into it make it more difficult to climb over. Ensure fence panels are fitted securely and cannot be levered out of the vertical posts, and make sure those posts are firmly located and cannot move.
- Thorny plants planted in vulnerable border areas can also be a good deterrent but do not let them grow too high as they might provide concealment for an intruder.

- There may be local planning regulations regarding the height of front garden fences and hedgerows or whether the garden must remain 'open plan'.
- Don't forget visibility from your driveway onto the road, or the effects a large hedgerow or fence may have on road traffic and drivers' view at junctions.
- If you consider using barbed wire, spikes, anti climb paint etc, the Householders Liability Act 1984 needs to be taken into consideration along with any local bye laws or regulations about its use, especially alongside public footpaths, rights of way and highways.
- Larger trees and bushes growing close to your fence and items such as wheelie bins can be used as natural ladders to climb over your fence.

OCCUPIERS LIABILITY ACT 1984

For security purposes this generally applies to materials such as barbed wire, anti climb paint or types of security toppings on a roof, wall or fencing.

Home Office Guidance states:-

- The circumstances in which an occupier of property may be liable to a negligence claim by a person who has been injured while trespassing on their property are governed by the **Occupiers' Liability Act 1984**, which defines in statute the duty of care owed by an occupier. The Act places a duty on occupiers to prevent injury to trespassers by ordinary hazards which may be found on the premises or by hazards that have been deliberately placed there by the occupier as a means of protecting the premises against trespassers.

The 1984 Act states that the occupier owes a duty only if:-

- a. He is aware or has reasonable grounds to know of the danger ,
- b. He knows or has reasonable grounds to believe that the trespasser may come into the vicinity of the danger and
- c. The risk is one against which, in all the circumstances of the case, he may reasonably be expected to offer some protection.
- d. The duty can be discharged by taking reasonable steps to give warning of the danger or to discourage people from incurring the risk, and no duty is owed where the risk is willingly accepted by the trespasser.

The determination of liability in individual cases is a matter for the courts, having due regard to all the circumstances of the case and the actions and standards that it is reasonable to expect from each of the parties involved.

(<http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/burglary/burglaryminisite09.htm>).

LIGHTING

- Consider an outside security light which activates with movement (don't blind the neighbours with an excessively bright one)
- In gardens regularly visited by cats and foxes at night, alternative low energy lighting with dusk to dawn timers could be considered. This form of lighting can remain on all night and give an ambient glow, but at low cost and environmental impact.
- Lighting placed in an area where no one can see what happens under it, may help the criminal see what he is doing, whereas lighting which reveals a person to the view of passers by or residents may be sufficient to reveal an identity or be sufficient to prevent criminal activities.

PROPERTY MARKING /POST CODING

- You can property mark expensive items with your post code and photograph difficult to describe objects to aid identification. (There are many ways of marking property. Die stamping, etching, using ultra violet marker, permanent marker, smart water or micro dots, DNA grease etc) or sacrificial marking such as painting your mower with a bright coloured paint or marking with a permanent marker, to such an extent it makes it so obvious that it would make it unattractive for the thief to steal and increase his chance of being caught if found with it.

INSURANCE

- Check whether you need additional cover on your household Insurance to cover your shed or, outbuilding and contents. Some large garden items such as expensive statues or garden furniture may need separate insurance.