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COALVILLE TOWN BEAT CRIME PREVENTION ADVICE

*** KEEP YOUR HOME SAFE***

Burglars will use a variety of ways to avoid being noticed.

They don't want to be seen or heard by a neighbour or passer-by because they will feel exposed and identifiable.

Distraction burglars will pretend to be someone they are not, so it's important you are aware of the common methods they will use to get you to let them into your property.

Here's some useful advice, firstly on helping to keep burglars out by giving them no hiding place and, secondly, on how to prevent a distraction burglary.

Keep it visible

You'd think that it would be best to make a property less visible from the street, and to keep it hidden from prying eyes behind overgrown bushes, trees, high fences or walls. In reality, all that this serves to do is make it easier for a burglar to get close to a home unnoticed, and provide somewhere to hide while carrying out a burglary or theft from the property.



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1. Lower fences at the front around one-metre high are preferable to high fences as they allow for a clear view over the top and don't provide cover for anyone wishing to hide.
2. At the rear and sides, taller fencing is recommended to prevent easy access.
3. Trellis, thorny plants, or a suitable anti-climb topping such as plastic spikes make it difficult for anyone climbing over a fence or gate.
4. Planting prickly or barbed shrubbery along boundaries and fence lines acts as an effective natural barrier.
5. Gravel driveways and paths will make sure you hear anyone approach.

For more information on creating a boundary, visit our [advice on criminal damage](#).



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Other ways to make it difficult for burglars

CCTV

By using well-defined boundaries as a basis, CCTV can be a valuable tool. However, it doesn't prevent a crime from being committed and does have limitations.

CCTV linked to a smartphone will alert you to someone crossing your boundary.

Most importantly, CCTV is no substitute for good quality physical security such as secure doors and windows.

Some cameras work by day and by night, and record when they detect movement. Some can be remotely viewed from a smartphone.

Position cameras where they are best able to obtain good quality facial images. Could you recognise or identify someone from the footage?

There is legislation for home CCTV use, so always seek advice from an accredited installer first to ensure your system complies with the law.

Place signage up warning that CCTV is in use.

For advice and approved suppliers of CCTV visit the [National Security Inspectorate](#) and the [Security Systems and Alarms Inspection Board](#).

Alarms

Consider an accredited burglar alarm system with audible alarm boxes mounted high at the front and rear of your home. Two visible audible alarm boxes are better than one. Mount them at the front and rear of your home, high up to resist tampering.

There are three types of burglar alarm, varying in capability and cost:

1. Monitored – Once triggered, an alarm company or designated key holder can check to ensure it isn't a false alarm.
2. Unmonitored – This type, once activated, will sound a loud alarm designed to scare off an intruder and alert neighbours but they are reliant on someone such as a neighbour checking the house.





3. Auto Dialler – This system, once activated, alerts pre-programmed key holders with either a text or a phone call.

The police will typically respond to a burglar alarm if requested to do so by a monitoring company but are less likely to respond to an unmonitored alarm.

If you have an extension to your home remember to extend your burglar alarm coverage as well.

Burglars have been known to use ladders to access upper windows that appear to be unlocked. This is to avoid intruder alarm sensors on the lower floor. To help protect your property from this approach, you should extend any alarm sensor coverage to upper rooms.

Signage is an effective deterrent if used with an active alarm system.

For advice and approved suppliers of alarms visit the [National Security Inspectorate](#) and the [Security Systems and Alarms Inspection Board](#).

Lighting

External lighting

Lighting is a good deterrent and is recommended at doors as it makes it safer for you when coming and going after dark.

A clear, low white light that activates at dusk to dawn is ideal for lighting a yard and garden and allowing any person to be clearly seen.

Check to make sure that trees and plants do not obscure your lighting. It's recommended that you regularly cut vegetation back.

Take care to position these lights so that light pollution doesn't annoy your neighbours.

Internal lighting

Use an automatic plugin time switch to operate a lamp or light at pre-set times when you're away.

Energy saving LED bulbs are best as they do not use as much electricity, last longer than conventional bulbs and do not generate heat, reducing fire risk.

In blocks of flats, automatic low energy lights that detect movement are recommended for corridors, stairwells and communal areas such as car parks and cycle stores.





Distraction burglary

Distraction burglars pretend to be someone they are not in order to gain entry to your home.

Common methods used by distraction burglars

- pretending to be from a care agency, the council or a utility company investigating a gas or water leak
- seeking help to leave a note for a neighbour or even asking for a drink of water if they claim to be thirsty or unwell
- claiming to be in a hurry or emergency and needing to get into your home quickly
- working in teams, with one person distracting you while the other searches your home

How to prevent it

There are a number of things you can do to prevent distraction burglary. Always remember "if in doubt, keep them out":

- use your door viewer to see who's there
- if you open the door put the chain on first
- always ask for ID and check it with the company before letting somebody into your home
- use the phone number advertised in the phone book or online, as the number on their identity card could be fake. For a utility company, call the customer service department. Close the door while you do this
- remember that genuine callers won't mind checks. If you feel at all unsure, schedule a time for the caller to come back when a friend or relative is there
- for pre-planned appointments with utility companies, a password scheme can be set up

If you feel threatened or in danger by the presence of the caller, call [999](tel:999).

