

# HOME SECURITY

## SKILL LEVEL



No special skills are required, but some experience of electrical work would be an advantage when fitting a burglar alarm.

## SAFETY FIRST

It is estimated that as many as 60% of burglaries are made by entry through unlocked windows and doors, so it makes sense to check that you have secured all your doors and windows before going to bed or leaving the house. An intruder alarm provides additional peace of mind and a simple smoke alarm gives advanced warning in the event of fire. All the equipment you need is available for you to fit yourself.

## INTRODUCTION

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## 2 - Basic security

Contact your local Crime Prevention Officer at the nearest police station for advice on how to protect your home from intruders.

Most burglars are opportunists looking for lapses in home security but there are measures that can be taken to improve home security and make life difficult for even the more resourceful intruder:

- Always fit the best-quality security devices you can afford. Choose fittings that carry a British Standard Kitemark as recommended by the police and insurance companies.
- Always remove the key from a lock and place it out of sight and reach of an intruder.
- Leave a light on and the radio playing when you go out for the evening.
- Buy one or two time switches and set them to operate some lights when you are away on holiday. Remember to cancel regular deliveries such as newspapers and milk. It is a good idea to inform your neighbours and the police that you are away.
- Make an invisible identification mark such as your name and postcode on your valuables using a

- special property-marking pen.
- Do not rely on ordinary window catches to keep intruders out - really determined burglars will simply break the glass and slip the catch.

Special key-operated locks are available to fit most types of window, from traditional sliding sashes and casements to modern metal-framed windows and patio doors. Keep keys out of reach of the window but where you can reach them in an emergency.

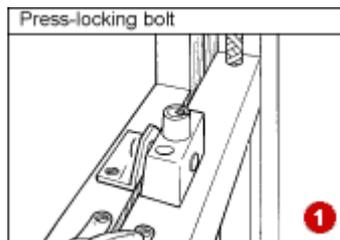
If you are going away,

1. Leave a key with a trusted neighbour who will check your house regularly and ask him or her to collect the post and free newspapers.
2. Upgrade your windows by fitting locks particularly to ground-floor and basement windows, and to others that can be reached easily without the aid of a ladder.

### **3 - Windows - Sliding sash windows**

Wooden sliding sash windows are often secured with a cam or fitch fastener placed at the centre of the sash meeting rails. These look attractive and are reasonably efficient but a burglar can unlock them with nothing more than a strong knife, so when choosing locks, look for those that have a removable key.

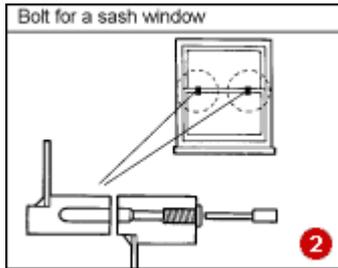
#### **Press-locking bolt**



Improve your security by fitting a press-locking bolt.

1. Fit the keeper to the outer sash frame and the lock body to the inner meeting rail. Fit a single lock close to the centre of a small window and fit a pair of locks to a wider one.
2. Having screwed the keeper in place extend the bolt so that you can use it to position the lock body accurately. Turning a key releases the lock.

#### **Window bolt**



As an alternative to a press locking bolt fit a discreet window bolt to secure a sash window. This is a thin bolt that passes through both meeting rails, preventing them from sliding apart.

Fit one or two, depending on the width of the window.

1. With the window closed drill a hole for each bolt through the inner meeting rail into the outer rail. Mark the drill with tape to establish the depth of the hole.
2. Open the window and tap the metal liners (supplied with the bolt) into the holes until they are flush.
3. Close the window and insert the threaded bolt using the special key provided. Unscrew and withdraw the bolt to open the window.

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### Sash stops

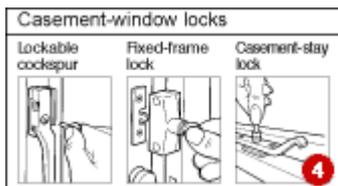


Sash stops allow you to open a window partially for ventilation without compromising security. Fit a sash stop on both sides of the window.

1. Drill a hole in the upper sash frame about 75mm (3in) above the meeting rail.
2. Cut a recess and screw the fitting in place.

To open the window fully push back the bolt with the key.

## 4 - Windows - Wooden casement windows



Wooden casement windows are hinged down one side and fastened to the fixed frame with a lever or cockscur handle. A casement stay is often used to hold the window in the open position.

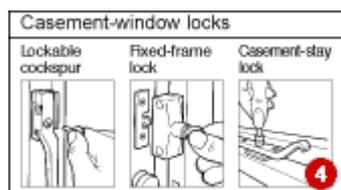
A number of simple devices are available for securing casements:

Fitting instructions are usually supplied with window locks and bolts - as each lock differs in detail, it pays to read the manufacturer's recommendations before you start work.

- Replace old cockspur handles with new lockable ones - these are made for left or right-hand opening.
- If you want to retain your original cockspur handles screw a lock (or a pair of locks) to the fixed frame. A keeper plate, screwed to the casement, latches automatically when you close the window and is released with a key.
- Secure the casement stay with a simple key-operated lock. A threaded stud, which can be used to replace the original stay peg, passes through a hole in the stay arm. Screwing a locknut onto the stud prevents the stay from moving.

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## 5 - Windows - Metal casement windows



Locks for metal-framed windows are similar to those used for wooden casements, but you will have to drill pilot holes in the metal for the fixing screws.

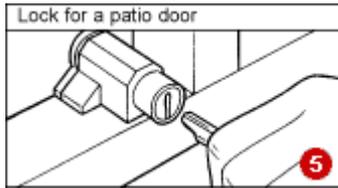
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## 6 - Patio doors

Patio doors are, in effect, large horizontally-sliding windows.



Special key-operated locks are available to improve security. Fit one at the top and one at the bottom to prevent the glazed frames being lifted from their tracks.

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## **7 - Fitting burglar alarms**

Your first line of defence against burglary should always be strong locks on all vulnerable entry points to your home. However, an alarm siren or bell prominently displayed on an outside wall will deter the majority of burglars.

There are basically two types of intruder alarm: passive systems and perimeter systems, but some alarm kits are a combination of both.

If you are not sure what type of alarm system would best suit your home ask your local Crime Prevention Officer for advice.

Many people prefer to have an alarm installed by a professional but there are numerous alarm packages designed for self-installation.

### **Hard-wired systems**

Hard-wired systems incorporate individual sensors that monitor all points of entry:

- vibration sensors are fixed to glass;
- contact breakers are fitted to door and window frames;
- pressure pads are placed on stair treads and floor mats.

Passive sensors that detect the presence of an intruder may also be included. Each sensor is connected by bell wire to a central control unit that is wired into the mains.

The wire runs are fairly unobtrusive but it is best to conceal

them when possible. Run wires under the floor or tuck them beneath the edges of fitted carpets.

### **Wire-free systems**

Wire-free alarm systems are particularly easy to install and avoid having to deal with unsightly wire runs.

When the alarm system is activated passive detectors will sense the presence of an intruder and transmit a radio signal to a central control unit that, in turn, triggers the siren or bell. You can have as many detectors as you like and each one is set with the same simple code that will be recognised by your control unit.

Ensure any alarm switches off automatically after 20 minutes, as there are penalties for causing a nuisance.

Wire-free systems invariably include a magnetic-contact transmitter which protects the main entry/exit point of the house. This transmitter will activate the control unit and sound the alarm when the contacts are separated. A delay can be set to allow you plenty of time to deactivate the alarm when you come home.

Other accessories include a personal alarm or 'panic button' which is usually screwed to the front door. The system can be controlled with a small remote-control transmitter. This device doubles as a personal alarm up to several metres from your home.

Wire-free systems can be dismantled easily so that you can take your alarm with you when you move home.

## **8 - Smoke detectors**

A smoke alarm is an early-warning device designed to sense the presence of smoke and fumes before a serious fire develops. Mains-powered detectors incorporate a battery as a back-up.

It is possible to connect up to twelve detectors with two-core bell wire. When one detector senses smoke all the detectors sound the alarm.

Most householders opt for self-contained battery-powered detectors that are very easy to install. This type of detector has a test button to check that the battery is still working and will even emit an intermittent alarm to indicate that the battery is running low. Some also incorporate a high-output escape light that is activated with the alarm to illuminate the area.

Make sure a smoke detector conforms to BS5446 Part 1, and carries the British Standard Kitemark.

You should install a smoke detector where it will give you the earliest possible warning of fire, but preferably not directly over a heater or air conditioning vent, nor in bathrooms or kitchens where it could be triggered by steam. However, some detectors have a built-in 'pause facility' which allows you to silence the alarm for a few minutes should it be accidentally activated.

Screw a smoke detector to the ceiling at least 300mm (1ft) away from the walls and light fittings. If it is more convenient to mount the detector on a wall, it must be at least 150mm (6in) but not more than 300mm (1ft) below the ceiling.

- In a bungalow fit a detector to the ceiling of your hallway, halfway between your bedroom and the living areas where a fire is most likely to break out.
- In a two-storey home fit one detector in the hallway just above the foot of the stairs, and a second detector on the upstairs landing.

Most smoke detectors are powered by nine volt batteries. Test your alarm occasionally to check it is working and change the battery at least once a year or when the low-battery warning sounds.

## **9 - Fire blankets/extinguishers**

Install a fire extinguisher and fire blanket in the kitchen where most fires start. Choose a general-purpose extinguisher that complies with BS5423.

Domestic extinguishers are designed to tackle small fires only and should not be used to extinguish a chip-pan fire.

If the fire gets out of control call the fire brigade immediately.

Fire extinguishers come with a wall-mounting bracket that is attached with screws. Position the extinguisher in a prominent position and close to a door that will provide a safe escape route. Have fire extinguishers checked and serviced regularly.

Chip-pan fires are common and easily get out of hand. Turn off the heat source and use a fire blanket to smother the fire. Do not try to move the pan, carry it outside, or

extinguish the fire with water.

Check that a fire blanket meets BS6575 standards and mount the blanket dispenser next to your fire extinguisher.

Take the fire blanket from its dispenser and drape it over the pan to deprive the fire of oxygen.