

Ten easy ways to avoid a burglary

Most break-ins are carried out by casual thieves looking for easy pickings. A thief is unlikely to persist if he encounters locked doors and windows. Rapid entry and exit are vital for him, and he will not climb in and out of the house through broken glass.

The tips on this page will all help to keep your home secure.

GETTING HELP FROM THE POLICE

If you want specific advice on how to protect your home, telephone the Crime Prevention Officer at your local police station. He will visit the house if necessary, point out weak spots in your defences and suggest the most appropriate security devices for your circumstances.

If you see anyone loitering in your street or acting suspiciously, do not disturb them. Call the police, then continue to watch unseen until they arrive.

Neighbourhood Watch groups, run in collaboration with the local police, are intended to encourage

neighbours to work together by watching for anything suspicious in the area. They also stress the importance of protecting property, and marking valuables. If you are interested in getting involved in a group, contact your local Crime Prevention Officer.

1 Garage

Add extra security to a back door inside a garage, where an intruder could work totally hidden. And ensure that the garage itself is fitted with secure locks.

2 Ladders

Keep ladders locked away. If they must be stored outside, padlock them to a wall with special brackets.

3 Sheds

Make sure sheds are securely padlocked. Tools stored there could be used for a break-in. A garden spade, for example, makes a powerful lever for opening windows.

5 Accessible windows

Fit locks to windows near flat roofs, drainpipes and trees where easy access is possible.

6 Marking valuables

Print your house number and post code on valuable possessions with an ultra-violet marking pen. This will help police to prove they were stolen, and assist in returning them. Metal items can be marked with hammer-and-letter punches. Collect valuable items together and photograph them, showing on the photograph where they are marked.

7 Lost keys

Never have a name-and-address tag on your keys. At most, use your surname with a company address or the address of a relative. Be wary of leaving home to go and collect keys from someone who says they have found them. It may be a ruse to get you out of the house while the keys are used for entry.

8 Ground-floor windows

Never leave windows open when you go out.

4 Deliveries

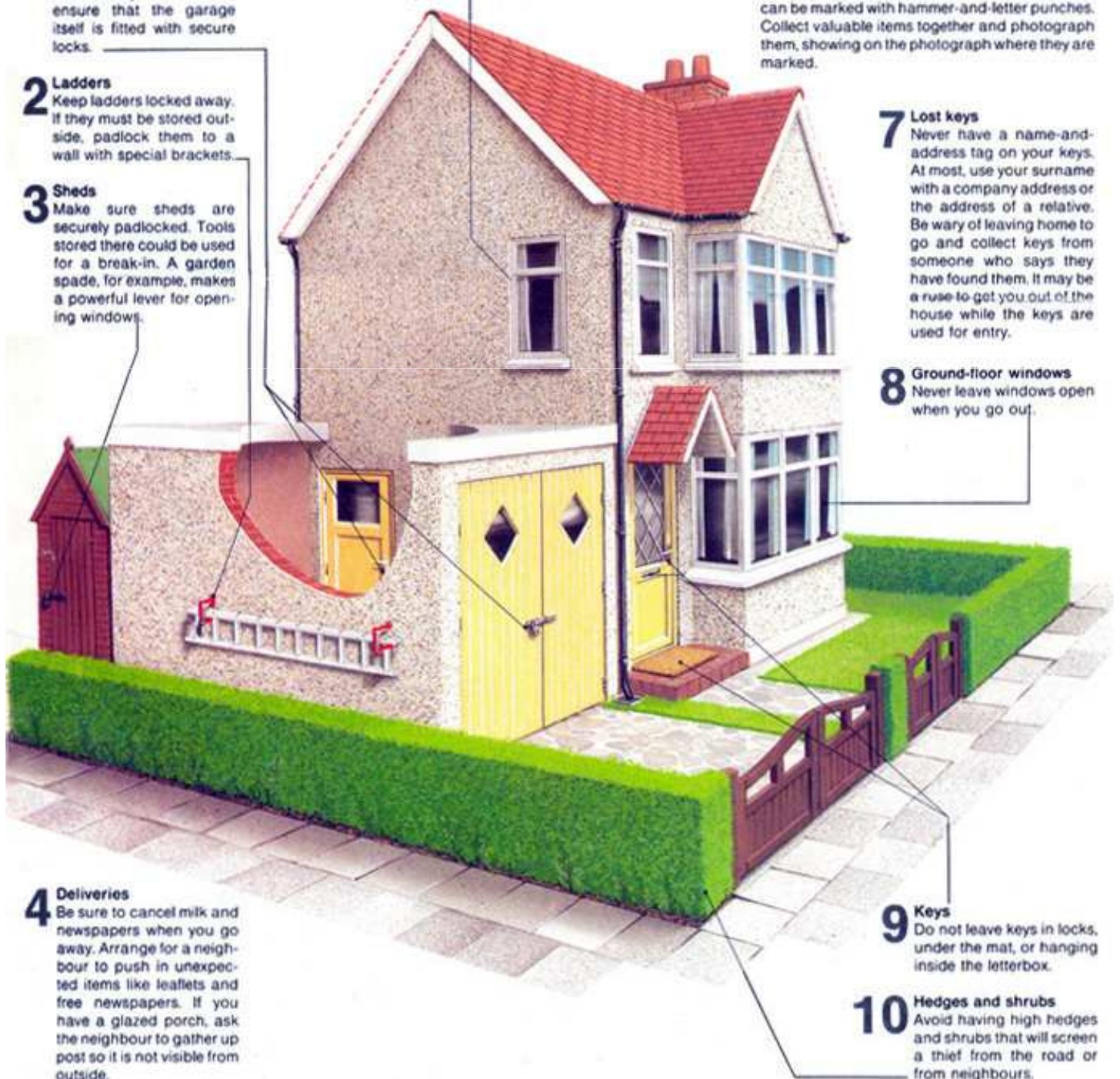
Be sure to cancel milk and newspapers when you go away. Arrange for a neighbour to push in unexpected items like leaflets and free newspapers. If you have a glazed porch, ask the neighbour to gather up post so it is not visible from outside.

9 Keys

Do not leave keys in locks, under the mat, or hanging inside the letterbox.

10 Hedges and shrubs

Avoid having high hedges and shrubs that will screen a thief from the road or from neighbours.



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