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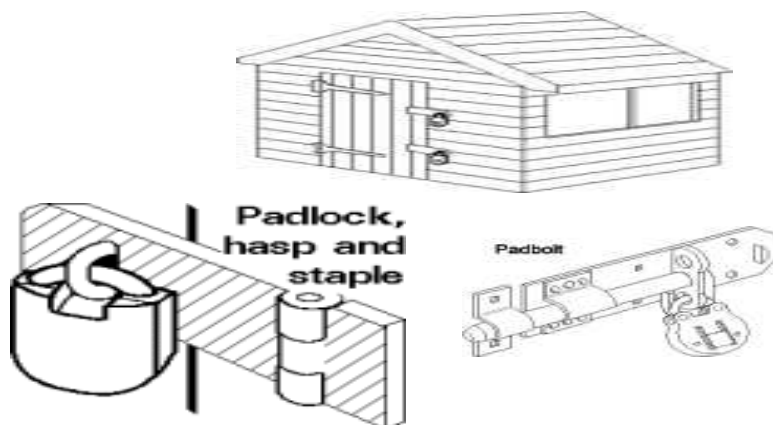
Important Police Advice – Seasonal Increase In Shed Burglaries

What value do you place on your shed contents?

Is it property marked?

Are there tools, ladders etc in the shed which would make breaking into your house much easier?

Don't Let Them Get Away With It – Act Now !



Garden Sheds

Garden sheds are a very popular target with burglars and are often overlooked when security is being considered. The value of the contents, such as garden mowers, trimmers and cycles etc. can often add up to many hundreds of pounds. It is therefore wise to secure the shed door with at least one heavy duty hasp and closed-shackle padlock.

It may not always be appropriate to fit a heavy duty padlock, hasp and staple as the shed door and frame may not be strong enough to support them. There is a range of smaller but sturdy padlocks, padbolts, hasps and staples which would be suitable. Whether fitting heavy duty devices or otherwise, always use coach-bolt fixings through the door and frame.

All opening windows require good window locks.

In addition to fitting external physical security to your shed, it is worth considering the installation of an alarm. This does not mean a complete burglar alarm system, though, if your house already has such an installation, it may be possible for it to be extended to the shed. There are various stand-alone devices on the market specifically designed for remote use in garages or sheds, which fall into two main categories:

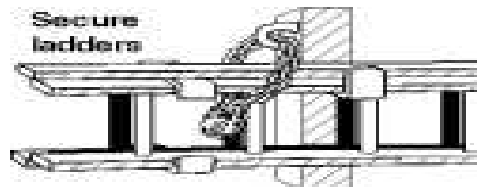
- a passive infra-red detector within the shed to detect movement and body heat
- a door contact system

Both systems will operate a sounder if the shed is accessed without the correct de-activation. They are available with battery or mains power supply and can be purchased from your local locksmiths, D-I-Y or discount store.

The major problem with vulnerable garden sheds is that they provide burglars with an arsenal of house breaking implements, e.g. the versatile garden spade: because of the blade size and the leverage that can be exerted, few door or window locks can withstand a prolonged attack from this implement. If the shed is too fragile to secure adequately, the spade should either be bolted or padlocked to a heavy bench or frame, or, better still, kept in a more secure place such as a locked garage.

Alternatively, your tools can be secured by chaining them together.

Consider the use of a strong lockable box or cage within the shed in which you can store not only your garden tools but also insecticides, weed killers or other items which may be harmful to health or plants if improperly used.



Garages

Garages are frequently used for storing not only cars, motor bikes and cycles, but also property similar to those found in garden sheds, as well as DIY power tools and sporting equipment. Considering the value of the property contained therein, security precautions are often found to be wanting, and for this reason they are identified by burglars as easy targets.

If you already have a burglar alarm system, why not extend it to the garage?

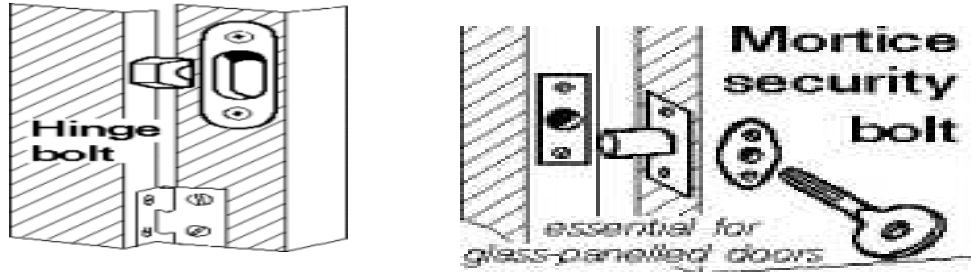
Alternatively, there are various stand-alone alarm devices on the market specifically designed for remote use in garages or sheds, which fall into two main categories:

- a passive infra-red detector within the shed to detect movement and body heat
- a door contact system

Both systems will operate a sounder if the garage is accessed without the correct de-activation. They are available with battery or mains power supply and can be purchased from your local locksmiths, D-I-Y or discount store. Ladders should also be chained and padlocked to a strong post or a garage wall.

Wooden Double Leaf Doors

It would be preferable to secure the doors with a heavy duty hasp and staple, coach bolted through the doors, together with a closed shackle padlock.



Up and Over Doors

It is probably best not to rely solely on the centre lock provided. If the door is the only means of entry to the garage, it should be fitted with a hasp and staple, together with a padlock as above. There are also mortice locks specially designed for garage doors that close into the side frame. Before fitting, take note of the gap between the door and the frame, as some of the bolts have only a short throw. If there is another exit/entrance, and the door opens along runners, consider drilling through one of the runners just behind the wheel in the closed position, inserting a long bolt to stop the wheel moving along the runners. If the door operates on a hinged bar and not runners, drill through the side metal frame and pass a padlock through this hole and around the hinged bar to stop the door lifting.

Exit / Entrance Doors

If opening inwards this should be fitted with a 5 lever mortice (deadlock), and, if opening outwards, should additionally be fitted with hinge bolts. If the door is not thick enough to take a mortice lock, it should be fitted with a heavy duty hasp and staple, coach-bolted through the door, together with a closed shackle padlock.

Property Marking

The main Crime Prevention purpose of marking your property is to make it less attractive to thieves to steal it in the first place as they know that if they are caught in possession of it by the Police and the Police can quickly establish it is stolen property, they are in trouble! In addition, the traceable property may be more difficult for them to "cash in" with another criminal or to a willing purchaser of the item. Of course it also greatly enhances the chances of you being re-united with the item which is important too.

Although etching/punching your Postcode and house number or name/company name on property can be very effective it is often not a practical option so we have other ways of effective Property Marking.

Electronic marking

www.immobilise.com offers a free service to mark, record and retrieve all serial and identification marks in one place free of charge. The web site is also accessed by the Police when stolen property is recorded in order to identify and return it to its owner. Without evidence that it is stolen we can not prosecute the thief !

Police offered marking products

The Association Of Chief Police Officers recommends via its SecuredbyDesign scheme Property Marking Products/Companies which satisfy their criteria. Kits cost in the range of 15 pounds which includes warning labels to would be thieves, an important aspect.

Go to www.securedbydesign.com, click on licensed companies then Property Identification to assess your choices.

UV pen marking

UV pen marking still has a role to play in Crime Prevention however, only after the above methods have been considered.

The principle here is that you mark your postcode followed by the house number or name on property with an UV pen which is invisible to the naked eye. Again you display stickers usually supplied with the pen to illustrate that you have done this. Police have access to UV lights which show up postcodes etc when shone on your UV mark of your postcode. Pens cost a pound or so hence their popularity however we are moving towards contemporary methods as above in order to reprofile the Crime Prevention benefit of Property Marking.

Photography

Taking photographs of property as detailed as possible is recommended for reconciliation/prosecution of offender purposes, particularly if it is not property marked.

PC Andy Blackmore

Sevenoaks District Community Safety Unit
Crime Prevention Officer
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