

MERTON NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH



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*Crime Prevention Advice
Booklet*

*Mitcham Police Station
020 8649 3213
mertonnhw@met.police.uk
www.mertonnhw.co.uk*

Reporting a Crime

Emergencies

In an emergency you should phone 999.

You should use this service to contact police in situations when you need an immediate response – if a crime is happening now or if anyone is in immediate danger. Deaf and deafened people using a Textphone (minicom) should dial 18000 in an emergency. Please use the 18001 TextDirect prefix for non emergency calls. Typetalk can be contacted on 08007311888 or visit www.typetalk.org.

Non emergency contact number

If you wish to contact the Metropolitan Police Service and it is not an emergency please call 0300 123 1212. If you are deaf or have speech impairment you can use a textphone to call us. Dial 18000 in an emergency, or 18001 0300 123 1212 if your call is not an emergency. You can call it any time, 24 hrs a day, 7 days a week. Local call charges apply on BT lines. Mobiles and other networks may vary. If you need to call us from outside of the UK, you can call us on +44 207 230 1212.

Online reporting

Certain categories of crime committed in the Greater London area can now be reported over the internet, as long as an urgent response is not required.

www.met.police.uk/reportingcrime/index.htm

Local police stations

In non emergency situations you should usually contact the local police in the area where the crime has occurred – either by phone or by going to the nearest police station with a front office open to the public.

Merton has 2 police stations:

Wimbledon Police Station – 0300 123 1212

1223 Queens Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 8NN
Opening times: 24 hours a day. Disabled access and facilities.

Mitcham Police Station – 0300 123 1212

58 Cricket Green, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 4LA
Opening times: 24 hours a day. Disabled access and facilities.

Crimestoppers

Is an independent UK wide charity working to stop crime. If you have information about any crime and you would prefer to offer in confidence and anonymously, call free on **0800 555 111**

Intelligence Gathering

Intelligence gathering is used by Police as a means of preventing and also solving crime. Merton Borough Police have a dedicated intelligence unit. This unit employs analysts who look at crime patterns. How, where, and when crime is carried out? They are trained to look for even the slightest trend and try to predict where best to utilise Police Officers, and also identify suspects. Police need every piece of information about persons acting suspiciously, no matter how trivial it may seem at the time.

Yours may be the last piece of the jigsaw.

Snippets of information taken in isolation may seem to be of limited value, but when fed into the intelligence system, each snippet is capable of showing the bigger picture. The old Police Five term "Keep 'em peeled" applies just as much today, in fact more, as with computers, we are able to do so much more with the information nowadays.

Crime Prevention Advice

Crime Prevention Unit

This unit is made up of crime prevention police officers that have a wide range of booklets, leaflets, and fact sheets available, which cover all aspects of crime prevention. They are able to offer crime prevention advice on home security, personal safety or vehicle security over the telephone, or they are able to conduct a home visit for a free crime prevention survey. They can also provide property marking kits. They advise the council on crime prevention measures that include things such as improved lighting, making communal areas safer for residents, and making places less accessible to outsiders, and also consulting on placement of CCTV cameras.

If you would like to contact the unit please call: 020 8649 3249.

Burglary

Don't Become a Victim

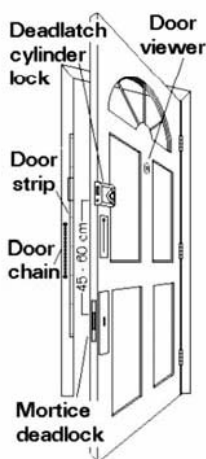
When leaving your home, even for a short period, always lock all external doors and windows and set your burglar alarm (if you have one). It is recommended that you fit a good automatic dead latch cylinder lock (rim lock) and a good 5 lever mortice deadlock (conforming to British standards) to your front door. You can strengthen the door frame by fitting a 'London bar' to support the locking points and a 'Birmingham bar' to reinforce the hinges.

If you are unsure about the suitability of your locks or would like security advice or a visit, please contact Merton Crime Prevention Officers on 020 8649 3245.

THIS IS A FREE SERVICE PLEASE USE IT!

Crime Prevention Advice: External Doors

If you see anyone committing a crime or acting suspiciously please ring the police using 999. If you wish to report any crime anonymously, please call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111



It has been found that criminals are targeting houses and flats with UPVC doors because homeowners are not locking them correctly. Some owners may not be aware that their door may be opened if it is not locked with a key from the inside by: using the external door handle, or accessing the inside door handle via the letterbox. In both cases, locking the door with a key from the inside could prevent entry.

To avoid becoming a victim of burglary, members of the public who have a UPVC front or back door must lift the handle, turn the key fully and then check the door is securely locked. Most doors have a five lever dead bolt system which is activated when the inside handle is lifted upwards. If UPVC doors are not locked properly, all but the central bolt can be disarmed and burglars can force the door relatively easily. UPVC doors are perfectly secure provided they are used correctly but all too often we find that residents simply leave their doors on the catch and do not lock them with a key.

This is enough to stop the door from coming open but it is not enough to stop the determined burglar who can easily reach in through the letterbox with his arm or an implement. By simply double locking the door with a key you can greatly reduce the likelihood of falling victim to one of these opportunist thieves.

Letterboxes

Letterboxes/plates should be considered as an aperture which can be used by the criminal, either to extract goods from within in close proximity to the door, commonly door keys, or to work vulnerable locking devices from the inside.

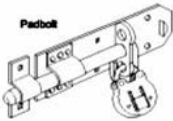
Letter plates should conform to British Standard. They should be positioned not closer than 400 mm from the door lock and under no circumstances should they be fitted to the bottom rail of the door. An internal cover plate offers additional security, as does a letter basket, though you might wish to consider removing the bottom, allowing the mail to fall to the floor and thus preventing theft of the mail. www.met.police.uk website will have more information.



Garden Sheds

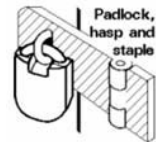
Garden sheds are a very popular target with burglars and are often overlooked when security is being considered. The value of the contents, such as garden mowers, strimmers and cycles etc. can often add up to many hundreds of pounds.

It is therefore wise to secure the shed door with at least one heavy duty hasp and closed shackle padlock.

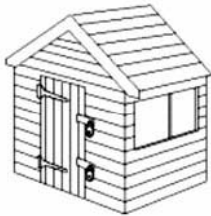


It may not always be appropriate to fit a heavy duty padlock, hasp and staple as the shed door and frame may not be strong enough to support them. There is a range of smaller but sturdy padlocks, pad bolts, hasps and staples which would be suitable. Whether fitting heavy duty devices or otherwise, always 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 standalone devices on the market specifically designed for remote use in garages or sheds, which fall into two main categories:



A passive infrared 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 deactivation.
They are available with battery or mains power supply and can be purchased from your local locksmiths, DIY 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.

Property Marking

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 reunited 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

If you have a Mobile Phone stolen or lose it, the police will be checking www.immobilise.com if they find it in the possession of a criminal or in the street etc to identify it.

It is a free service and takes a few minutes on line to register your phones details. Similarly if you have a bicycle you should register your Frame number etc. at www.immobilise.com. Warning stickers are available from the company.

Police offered marking products

The Association Of Chief Police Officers recommends via its Secured by Design 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. It may be worth checking with your local police Crime Prevention Officer to see if there are any ongoing initiatives which would enable you to avoid paying or whether the local police are working more with any particular “securedbydesign” property marking product in your area.

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 we are moving however 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 or prosecution of offender purposes, particularly if it is not property marked.

Bogus Callers

Bogus Callers

Think before you open the door use your chain and spy hole or look out of the window to see if you recognise them.

- Ensure that all callers have an appointment. Ask a friend or family member to be with you if you don't feel confident on your own.
- Ask all callers for proof of identity. Genuine tradesmen should carry an identification card with their photograph on. Check this carefully. If you are unsure, telephone the company the caller claims to represent, do not use the telephone number on the card – get this from the yellow pages or directory enquires. Genuine tradesmen won't mind waiting.
- Make the caller prove that they know your name and your account/customer number on your bill. They may try to get you to fill in the details for them by just saying Mrs. ???
- Wait for them to tell you what job they've come to do. Try not to ask them questions such as 'Are you from the gas board?'
- The Utilities now offer a password identification system. Any caller from one of these companies should be able to give a prearranged password as additional proof of identity.
- If someone comes to your door to try to sell you something, don't invite them in. Even if you're interested in what they are selling. Ask for a brochure or a business card and say that you need to talk to someone else. Never hand over any money at the door.
- If you are not convinced of the identity of the caller, don't let them in. Ask the caller to come back later and arrange for a friend, relative or neighbour to be present on their return or ask the caller to contact this person.

If you think you have been a victim of a bogus caller, even if you recognise the tricks and they are unable to steal from you, contact the police immediately.

Vehicle Crime

Vehicle Crime

Did you know that...

- Half a million vehicles are stolen in the UK every year.
- Vehicle crime accounts for more than a quarter of all reported crime.
- 40 % of stolen vehicles are never returned to their owners.
- Older cars are more likely to be stolen than newer ones.
- Property is stolen from cars every 13 seconds in England and Wales.
- More than 30 percent of vehicle crime happens in car parks.

Common car sense

Please remember to lock you vehicle every time you leave it. Always remove personal property such as handbags, stereos and satellite navigation equipment. Please also remove the cradle and wipe away any suction marks.

If you see anyone committing a crime or acting suspiciously please ring the police using 999. If you wish to report any crime anonymously, please call Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111**.

Number plates

As a simple prevention measure, motorists can replace the regular screws used to attach the number plate to their car with clutch screws that cannot be unscrewed once in place. Clutch screws are available from car part and hardware stores. They are relatively inexpensive and easy to fit and using them could save motorists the inconvenience, time and expense of having new number plates fitted.

Personal Safety

- Think ahead and plan your journey, avoiding deserted areas.
- Try to avoid walking alone at night, and keep to well lit main roads where possible. You should try to avoid short cuts like alleyways, waste ground and wooded, bushy areas.
- Stay alert: be aware of what's going on around you.
- It is always worth letting someone know where you are going, the route you intend to take and when you expect to return.
- Consider investing in a mobile phone. There are various services available for light users.
- Try to avoid wearing headphones your ability to hear traffic, strangers or potential trouble is severely restricted.

Safeguarding your mobile phone

As many as 10,000 mobile phones are stolen every month. Two thirds of the victims are aged between 13 and 16. Many phones are also stolen from unattended cars. Here are some practical measures you can take to keep your mobile phone safe.

Remember to...

- to register your mobile phone at www.immobilise.com.
- keep your phone out of sight in your pocket or handbag when not in use.
- use your phone's security lock code, if it has one.
- record details of your electronic serial number (ESN) and consider separate insurance.
- some phones have an IMEI number which is a unique identifier for the phone; you can obtain this number by typing *#06# (star hash 06 hash) into your phone and mobile it will display a 15 digit number.
- property mark your phone with your postcode and door number to help police identify stolen ones.
- report a lost or stolen phone to the police immediately.
- inform your service provider if your phone is stolen or lost.

Don't...

- attract attention to your phone when you are carrying or using it in the street.
- park in isolated or dark areas.
- leave your phone in an unattended car if you must, lock it out of sight. It only takes seconds for a thief to smash a window and steal your phone.

By taking these simple precautions, you can protect your phone. If you see anything suspicious, call the police, dial 999.