

With Suffolk set to enjoy some warm summer weather, police are reminding people to consider their home and vehicle security to deter thieves.

Many burglaries take place due to a lack of security with insecure windows and doors being deemed as two of the main ways in which opportunist thieves gained access to homes and vehicles.

Detective Superintendent Marina Ericson said: "It will come as no surprise that the summer months are always popular for thieves and with warmer weather on the way, it is likely many of us will spend more time outdoors. Therefore, it's important that we all continue to take security seriously and lock up – even if you're in another area of the house or in the garden.

"Thieves are opportunist and operate quickly. Typically, they will look for the easy option by looking for gaps in security and are often not afraid to try door locks. If they see an easy way to enter a property and steal something valuable, sadly, they'll take it so I would urge people not to leave valuable items such as laptops, vehicle keys and jewellery in view of windows.

"It's important to point out that our solved rate for residential burglary has seen an increase of 2.4% over the past 12 months, demonstrating that burglary remains a priority for the force and we continue to work hard to detect these crimes. Our burglary strategy includes the close monitoring and scrutinising of offences to help us understand crime trends, the methodologies employed by criminals and targeting 'hotspot' areas to ensure deployment of our resources effectively.

"Remember to keep garages and outbuildings secure too as burglars often look for times to help them break into homes. Be neighbourly by looking out for your local community and always report any suspicious activity to police. If you believe a burglary to be in progress always dial 999."

Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner Tim Passmore said: "With the fine weather that's forecast for the coming weeks, it is only natural that we all want to open windows and doors to enjoy the sunshine, but I would ask everyone to be aware of their home security so we don't give burglars the opportunity to pounce.

"Suffolk is a safe place to live and we want to keep it that way. If we could all take a little time to read the constabulary's simple tips and check our homes and garages are secure, we will hopefully reduce the number of these opportunist burglaries and have a summer to remember for the right reasons."

Suffolk police offers the following advice to residents:

LOCK

- Lock all doors and remove the keys before leaving the house.
- Keep front doors locked even when you are at home and especially if you are in the back garden.
- Close all windows fully before you leave the house, lock downstairs windows and remove the keys.
- Use window limiters to allow air in instead of keeping windows fully open, even when you're at home.
- Install window locks on upstairs windows that can be easily accessed by a flat roof.
- Lock back gates using a sturdy lock such as a closed shackle padlock to no less than CEN 3-4 security grade or 5 lever lock.

LIGHT

- Make your home look lived in – use timer switches if you're not home.
- 'Dusk-to-dawn' sensor security lighting is a cheap, low cost way of making sure the front of your home or shed/outbuilding is well-lit.
- Visible burglar alarms can make burglars think twice; get specialist advice and consult your insurance company.
- You could also consider installing a Ring doorbell camera in order to potentially film an opportunist burglar in action. For more information, visit <https://www.suffolk.police.uk/news/latest-news/27-02-2018/suffolk-teams-smart-home-security-company-tackle-burglars>.
- Hedging and shrubs to the front of your property should be pruned to no higher than 1m and trim trees up from the

ground to 2m. This will allow a clear line of sight across your property and will stop the garden being used as a hiding place.

HIDE

- Keep your valuables, jewellery, cash, passport and deeds to your property in a safe.
- Never leave spare keys in an open place. Be aware, burglars know all the usual hiding places so never leave a spare key under the doormat or under a garden gnome.
- Keep dustbins and wheelie-bins away from fencing/gates as these can be used by thieves to climb into windows or used to escape.
- Make sure valuables are property marked. Take photographs and keep a note of any serial numbers.
- Don't leave equipment and tools lying around that can be used by burglars to break into your home, such as hammers, shovels or gardening tools. Keep ladders locked away and out of sight.

For more home and vehicle security advice including technological devices available (such as alarms and motion sensor video doorbells) accredited by 'Secured by Design' do visit <https://www.suffolk.police.uk/advice/crime-prevention-z>

Anyone with information about thieves operating in their area should contact Suffolk police on 101 or Crimestoppers, anonymously, on 0800 555 111.

Help us keep our communities safe.

Police advice on a variety of subjects can be accessed via <https://www.suffolk.police.uk/advice>

To report something, or to otherwise contact Police, use the link <http://www.suffolk.police.uk/contact-us>

To report something anonymously call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or visit www.crimestoppers-uk.org

Alternatively call **101** for non-urgent matters.

Always call 999 in emergencies, or if an immediate police response is required.

Police Connect Team