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# *Home Security Buying Guide*



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# Home Security Buying Guide

The team at Security Direct have over 25 years' experience in the Security Industry. We have been to many Break-Ins and have worked with many of Police Forces across the Country with Crime Prevention. This Home Security guide comes from our experiences and is designed to help you keeping your Home Secure.

## WHY SECURE YOUR HOME?

People want to secure their homes for either Peace of Mind or they have been broken into previously. It is important to feel safe in your home but nobody wants to feel like they are in prison. A lot of our customers fit security to ensure they feel safe when they are asleep or going away on holiday. It is a horrible feeling when someone breaks into your home, have stolen your personal belongings and rummaged through your belongings. Some things are covered by Insurance but a lot of personal belongings have sentimental value and can never be replaced.

## TYPES OF HOME BURGLARIES?

The majority of break-ins for Home Owners are carried out by individual opportunist burglars. They are usually walking around the streets, looking for easy targets ie; empty homes, people on holiday or elderly, where they can be in and out very quickly with as little effort. They may carry a Screw Driver to gain access but not much else. They are usually looking for small goods that they can carry out very easily and sell very quickly.

A third of all Burglaries in the home are Sneak In burglaries. This happens especially in the warmer months, when people are in the garden and leave their doors and windows open. The Burglars simply walk in through open doors and usually the victim is not even aware of anyone is in their home.

You do get more Professional Burglars but they are less common. There are usually a couple of them which come well equipped and determined to gain access into the property, usually knowing what they are targeting once they are in the property. The professional burglars know that there are very valuable items in the property.

## WHAT PARTS OF MY HOME ARE MOST VULNERABLE?

66% of burglaries are through Doors

33% of burglaries are through Window

### DOORS

**Doors** are usually the most vulnerable as they are usually the easiest to break in through and also provide the Biggest Entry and Exit Point for getting goods out. The weaknesses of a Door;

**Door Panels** - These can either be Glass, UPVC or Wood Panels, usually top and/or bottom of the door. The Bottom Panels are especially vulnerable as they are at foot height and can easily be kicked through. Tapping the glass at strategic points causes double glazed panels to literally disintegrate, falling to the floor with little noise.

**Multi Point Locking Systems** - A lot of UPVC and Composite doors are sold with Multi Point Locking Systems which are sold as high security. The problem is that the locking system is operated from the one Key Cylinder. If it's a normal Euro Profile Cylinder then this can easily be broken within seconds and the whole locking system can be overridden from the outside. The burglars smash the handle off from the outside, which then exposes the cylinder. They then hit the cylinder several times with a hammer and the cylinder splits in half, allowing them to open the lock with a screwdriver. You can Purchase Anti Snap or Anti Bump Cylinders to prevent this happening.

**Wooden Doors** - Usually a Solid Hardwood Door is a good strong door. The problem you get is when you start drilling out the wood for locks. When you look at the lock which is within the door, there can be as little as 10mm of wood either side of the lock. This can be a weak point as the wood splits around the lock when attacked. There are simple Lock Plates available which are fitted either side of the lock or sandwich it for extra security.

### WINDOWS

**Windows** are vulnerable around the back or side of the property as they are usually hidden from sight of the neighbours and public. Burglars do break the glass to gain entry, but this does create noise and they don't want to attract attention. The other ways of breaking into windows include;

**Entry Through Open Windows** - A third of Domestic Break-ins is through an Open Window or Door. A lot of the time people leave windows opened for ventilation and forget to close them when they go out. Sometimes people leave 1<sup>st</sup> floor windows open thinking that they are not easily accessible. This makes it easy for the burglars and sometimes they even use children to get through small windows.

**Windows Locks** - They provide very little security against a windows been forced or jemmied open. Windows locks are fixed to the windows with very small screws and with a bit of force these simply pull out.

## **REAR OF PROPERTY**

As a general rule the rear of the property is the most vulnerable part of the house. This usually because the rear is hidden from view from neighbours and the public. Some gardens are screened for privacy, which also screens the burglars. Usually the front of the property is on a road or looked over by other properties, so generally the front of the property is less vulnerable.

## **FLAT ROOFS**

Flat roofs are easily accessible from the ground floor level. Most of the time there is a window that overlooks the Flat roof, this is a very vulnerable opening and must not be overlooked. You can fit Anti Climb spike around the flat roof, but it's expensive and very industrial looking. The recommendation would be to fit an internal grille and ensure the window is connected to the alarm system.

## **WHAT PRODUCTS ARE AVAILABLE TO HELP SECURE MY HOME?**

There are many products available which you can use to protect your home. It is not a matter of one product does all, it's all about using different products to create a Total Solution. Below are several security products,

## **DOORS**

**Euro Profile Cylinder Locks** - As mentioned earlier these are very vulnerable to attack and can be compromised in less than a minute. We strongly recommend that you replace the cylinder with an Anti Bump or Anti Snap Cylinder. You can buy these cylinders from Locksmiths, Online or from local DIY stores. They range from approx. £30 upwards. You can easily fit themselves within a few minutes and can save money by not getting a lock smith to replace them for you.

**Security Gates** - An external Security Gate can be fitted externally, independent to the Door. The great thing about Gates is that they offer an extra level of defence and you can also have the gate locked and door open for ventilation, without worrying about people sneaking in. When looking to buy a Security Gate ensure that the Gate has a good quality Deadlock, Full Height Anti Jemmy Strip and a minimum of 3 Hinges. Also ideal for people living on their own as its forms a secure barrier to anybody coming to the door.

**Folding Security Grilles** - Are fitted internally and offer a very secure and neat solution for protecting doors. They slide back to the side, out of the way and usually hide behind the curtains. The folding grilles come in a range of various security levels. When fitted over a door a Hinged Bottom track can be supplied so you don't trip over any floor tracks.

**Roller Shutters** - These are very common on the continent as they are used for Security and Shading, but it is not popular in the UK. Roller Shutters are usually fixed externally and are the most expensive product option. The Roller Shutters can be Manually operated for cost effectiveness or Electrically operated for easy operation. Roller shutters are usually down when you are out alerting the more adventurous burglar to “have a go”. So for this reason our LPS1175 Roller Shutters which are “Police and Insurance Approved” should be used.

## **WINDOWS**

**Window Bars** - These can be fitted internally or externally, but it is always more secure to fit the window bars internally. Window Bars are the most cost effective type of Security Grille, but they do look a little prison like. Fixed window bars are usually a cost effective way of securing small windows like Toilet and Pantry windows. The standard design is Vertical or Horizontal Bars Welded into a frame. There are options of having the Window Bars Fixed, Removable and hinged. There is a Diamond Lattice fixed grille which looks like “Leaded Windows”. The Diamond are large enough to get your hands through to Open and clean the windows. The diamond lattice also acts like a spider web, which is a lot stronger than just vertical bars.

**Folding Security Grilles** - Are fitted internally and offer a very secure and neat solution for protecting windows. They slide back to the side, out of the way and usually hide behind the curtains. The folding grilles come in a range of various security levels. One of the big advantages of the folding grilles is that they open, so you can use your window as a fire escape if ever required.

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## **Do I fit the Security Products Internally or Externally?**

Where possible it is always more secure to have the Security on the inside of the property, rather than externally. The reason for this that anything fitted externally, the fixings are exposed and can be tampered with. The external Security product can be attacked without breaking any glass or activating any alarms. If the Security is fitted internally, then a burglar has to break the glass and then break through the Security Barrier through broken glass, whilst the alarm is sounding.

## ARE THERE ANY OTHER SECURITY PRODUCTS AVAILABLE?

**Burglar Alarms** - They provide an audible alert if something triggers it. The problem is that in the early days burglar alarms used to False Alarm regularly so people generally ignore them. You can get an alarm that rings either you or a monitoring station if the alarm is activated. Generally a Burglar Alarm does not deter a burglar, as they know they have at least 5 minutes before anyone would come.

We also find that the Alarm Sensors are not fitted in the correct location. Alarm companies seem to put PIR's facing the internal doors and don't cover the external windows and doors. This means that the Alarms are not activated until the burglar is through the window and in the room. It is recommend that sensors also cover the windows.

It is also recommend that a Burglar Alarm is fitted with Security Grilles. If the alarm sensors are fitted correctly then then as soon as the glass is broken, the alarm is activated and then the burglar has to break through the grille through the broken glass. The grille will slow them down, which will eat into the alarm response time.

Having a Loud Alarm front and back is also more effective.

**CCTV** - This is becoming very popular and DIY kits are made available. CCTV can be good to see what time and how they broke in, but the majority of times the burglars are not recognisable on camera either they are covered up or the picture quality is not good enough for the police.

**Property Marking Kits** - There a various types available but the one used by the Police is a product called "Smart Water". This is an invisible ink that you apply to your property and has a unique DNA registered to you. When property is recovered by the Police they use a special scanner that can read the DNA which has your contact details, so they can return the goods back to you.

## OTHER HOME SECURITY TIPS:-

- 1) Don't leave packaging of expensive equipment out for the refuse collection ie; New Television. This advertises to burglars that you have that item in the property.
- 2) If you are going away then buy Timers for your lights. These will turn on and off at set times, giving the impression that somebody is in the property. Get a trusted neighbour to keep an eye on your property whilst away.
- 3) Don't leave Tools or Ladders out which are easily accessible. Lock them up in a Shed or Secure Building. Leaving these out help the burglars gain entry easier.

## **Security vs Fire Safety**

There is a conflict between Security and Fire Safety. Security is about securing your property by keeping people out and keeping you safe in your home. Fire Safety is about being able to freely escape and allowing the fire brigade to enter the property easily.

You should always plan an escape route if there ever was to be a fire. If you are planning to fit Security Grilles on a Fire Escape then ensure that you can open the grilles easily. It's also worth keeping the key in a safe place near to the opening that you could find if the room was dark.

The Fire Brigade won't have any problems gaining access into a property. They are fully equipped with heavy duty Cutting Equipment that can easily get through any type of security grille.