



PROTECT YOUR SHEDS AND GARAGES – update (April 2020)

Eastleigh police recently warned that theft of Outbuildings (mainly sheds and garages) is on the rise. Often sheds or garages contain valuables such as power tools and bicycles and represent 'soft' targets.

If you have some time to spare at the moment, here are some worthwhile projects that will improve shed and garage security.

GENERAL ACCESS SECURITY ADVICE

1. Low front boundary: Keep hedges and walls at the front of your house low (under one metre) so burglars have nowhere to hide.
2. Secure side gate: Keep side gates closed and locked at all times eg with a padlock. Open or insecure gates mean burglars can easily access your property, maybe without being seen by passers-by or neighbours.
3. High side and rear boundary: Keep hedges, walls and fences around your back garden high (over 1.8 metres). Add lightweight trellis to gates and fences and plant prickly plants to make it harder for burglars to climb over.
4. Gravel driveway and path: Use gravel driveways and paths to make it easier to hear intruders.
5. Security lights: Install outside security lights so that intruders can't approach without being seen.

SHEDS

6. Secure shed door: Always keep your shed locked and secured. Fit a hasp and staple with hidden screws (consider using occasional bolt through instead of screw to avoid it being prised off). Ensure the padlock is suitably rugged.
7. Door hinges: Ensure hinges for shed doors are internal (no exposed screws), not outside where they can be easily removed or use bolts to secure each hinge to the frame and bar to the door to make removal difficult.
8. Secure shed window: If necessary add an extra layer of protection to shed windows with laminate sheets or internal metal bar or grill.

9. Alarm system: Consider buying a shed alarm. Shed/garage alarms are usually quite cheap but effective nonetheless. If you like you can put a warning sign up.

GARAGES

10. Alarm system: Consider fitting a simple garage alarm. As above.
11. Garage Doors: If you can, consider parking your car close to the door so that it cannot be opened (or entered).
12. Manual Garage Door: Make sure your garage door cannot easily be opened from outside. For example, the normal up and over handle is not very secure – look at how you can protect the bolt from being pushed down from outside.
13. Motorised Garage Door: If you have a motorised door opener protect your emergency cord from being accessed from outside the garage.
14. Pedestrian Doors: Remember to secure any pedestrian doors or windows into your garage, for example toughen up your exterior door security with a deadbolt, and remember that your door's weakest point is the strike plate, where the lock meets the door. Replace the strike plate with a reinforced one, and use a minimum of 3-inch screws to secure it.

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15. Put tools away: Never leave tools lying around as they can be used as a way of breaking into your home.
16. Use covers: Keep large tools and items such as bicycles covered or out of sight to hide them from prying eyes
17. Keep cycles locked to a secure wall or ground anchor.
18. Property marking: Marking and recording your valuable items is advisable and tools can be painted or inscribed with your name or postcode.

There is a great deal of useful crime prevention guidance available online, particularly from Hants Police (<https://www.hampshire.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention/non-residential-burglary/secure-shed-garage/>).

Enjoy your projects and Keep Safe

Mike Anthony (Eastleigh Neighbourhood Watch Assocn Chair)