

# SECURITY HINTS - A GUIDE

1. Lock your vehicle after parking it.
2. If your vehicle is equipped with a pull out stereo, remove it and lock it in the boot after parking the vehicle. If it has a detachable control panel, remove it.
3. Do not leave valuables, such as shopping and cellular phones, on view in your car when you are not in it.
4. Lock doors and close windows when travelling alone at night - this particularly applies to women drivers. Criminals could otherwise easily force entry into the vehicle when stationary.
5. Do not leave items like cellphones on the passenger seat - these can be grabbed by criminals as you wait in jams or at traffic lights.
6. Retract radio aerials when leaving the car, to prevent them from becoming a target for vandalism. Window-foil and automatic (motorised) aerials are available as an alternative to manually-retractable ones.
7. Fit a high-quality alarm or immobiliser. Not only will this deter theft, but it will also normally entitle you to a discount on your motor insurance. Inexpensive dummy alarms, typically flashing red LEDs, may deter thieves. They don't offer protection, however, and they certainly won't give you a discount on your insurance.

Modern car alarms, which attract attention by flashing lights and/or sounding a built-in piezo horn, can be hooked up to a variety of sensors. The motion sensor is triggered by the vibrations of a criminal trying to force open a boot or door. Door and switches

are also triggered by forced entry. Ultrasonic sensors will detect breaking glass, and the presence of criminals within the car. Most alarms are armed and disarmed by using a coded keyfob remote control - some will automatically arm themselves when the last door has been closed. Don't forget to take your keys with you, though, or you'll be locked out!). Some will interface to central locking systems and electric windows, and will lock doors and close windows when armed. Many incorporate immobilisers - thieves won't be able to start the engine. Other car alarms will emit a bleep and flash hazard lamps just before disarming as you approach the vehicle and activate the keyfob remote - this can help you to locate your vehicle in a crowded car park. Alarms for motorcycles are also available from Maplin.

1. Close and lock all doors and windows when you leave the house. Hardware stores sell locks for securing windows. Padlock all gates that afford access to the rear of the property.
2. When going on holiday, inform neighbours so that they can keep an eye on the house in your absence. Don't forget to cancel the milk and newspapers - a build-up of these items will attract the attentions of criminals.
3. Leave a light on at night, to give the impression that you are in. Maplin sells light switches with a built-in timer that will switch on lighting during the appropriate time period. Plug-in time switches will allow desktop lights and other items to be switched on automatically. There are also switches that are inserted between a bayonet light fitting and the lamp bulb. Although most of these devices are based around the use of time switches, some others will switch on according to the ambient light level. This can be useful since you won't need to reset a timer's clock to BST or GMT.

**4.** Many modern TVs have built-in timers that will switch on the set at a preset period, thus giving the impression that there is activity in the building.

**5.** A security TV camera, mounted in the doorway, will allow you to check on callers before opening the door. Some systems will display the image from the camera on a standard TV set - others have dedicated black-and-white monitors. The camera could be fitted to other areas requiring monitoring, such as sheds, garages and out-houses. Many security cameras incorporate a microphone, so that you can hear the caller. A cheaper alternative is the fish-eye lens, which is mounted through a hole drilled into the front door.

**6.** If you want to speak to a caller before admitting them, a range of security intercoms are available. A caller presses a button, which activates a buzzer on an indoor unit. The noise alerts you to their presence; you can then then press a button to initiate conversation. Some security cameras provide intercom facilities.

**7.** Halogen security lamps, available in a variety of styles, are fitted to exterior walls. They include a passive infra-red (PIR) sensor that will activate when an intruder moves into close proximity to the beam. Their cover is thus blown. The sensitivity and range of the sensor can be adjusted to prevent false triggering by pets or people walking down the street.

Smaller, lower powered security lamps are ideal for installation at the front of the house, and are useful for providing automatic lighting when you arrive home in the dark with shopping. The higher-powered units are intended for use in rear gardens. They can also be used to provide evening lighting for social events, such as barbeques.

**8.** Install a good alarm. The easiest to set up are wireless alarms, in which the sensors communicate with a central control panel by means of radio waves. With wireless alarms, there's no need to run wires around the building. The more comprehensive alarms tend to be connected to sensors and exterior alarm boxes by means of wires, though. Sensors available include PIR types for detecting intruders in rooms, magnetic types that are triggered by the opening of a door or window, and conductive window foil that goes open-circuit when glass is broken. Be wary of the insurance benefits of a house alarm, though. If an insurance company can prove that you didn't arm the alarm, they can render all claims void - a sobering prospect, if many valuable items were stolen. Note that arming a house alarm is normally a much more involved process than the process required for a car alarm.