

Autumn / Winter Crime Warning

BEWARE..... the dark evenings are here again...and so are the 'Twilight Zone' burglars.

Be prepared for late afternoon darkness. A house in complete darkness at teatime will stand out like a sore thumb to a would-be burglar.

Your routine may be to leave home during the morning, and not arrive back until after dark in the early evening.

- You can create the impression that someone is at home by using a **TIMER SWITCH** to switch on lights, a radio or TV.
Again, if you are going out for the evening, leave lights on and make the house look 'lived-in'.
- It's worth considering exterior lighting as well. Fit a low wattage lamp with a dusk to dawn sensor to an outside wall in an appropriate place.
- Visible burglar alarms will make intruders think twice. Consider a system for your home, and for the car, particularly if it is left parked outside overnight. But contact the Crime Reduction Officer for advice before buying an alarm system for your home.
- Don't forget that many burglaries are committed through a rear door or window, so 'beef up' security at the back using additional good quality window and door locks.
- Sheds and garages are often neglected when it comes to security. Use strong padlocks, and if possible fasten ladders and expensive items down in the garage. You may be able to connect an alarm into the house from the garage.
- The car park thieves will be out doing their shopping for Christmas, so don't leave goods on view in the car.
- When you are out doing your Christmas shopping, beware of crowded shopping areas. With crowds come pickpockets and purse thieves. They know that people are likely to be carrying more cash than usual at this time of year.
- Finally, a reminder that after Christmas is a good time to consider marking new property with your post code and taking note of any serial numbers, and to update household insurance to cover any valuable items you have bought or received as presents. And make sure children look after new bikes!

For further advice on the above or any other crime prevention matters, you can contact PC Mark Wall or Dave Whitteron, Crime Reduction Officers on 01484 436839/40.