



Press Release

“Lock Up” Warning for Winter

Police in East Cheshire have issued a winter warning to people to lock the doors and windows of their homes.

They say a third of all burglaries in the area currently involve a criminal walking through an unlocked door or climbing through a window which has been left open.

Many of the burglaries have been carried out in the early evening when the family was at home. The burglar simply walked in grabbed a purse or handbag from the hall or kitchen and left.

Detective Inspector Nigel Groom, in charge of Cheshire Police Eastern Area burglary unit said, “Criminals like this time of year. The long dark evenings extend their working hours. It is a time when people need to take more precautions against burglary, not less. Leaving an outside door unlocked or a window open is like presenting them with an invitation to come in and take what they want.

“There are burglars who specialise in sneak-ins. They will walk along a street, nipping into back gardens where necessary and trying doors. Once they find one which is open they will be in very quickly and take what they want, even if you are in the next room.

“In some of the cases we are dealing with people have left doors unlocked or windows open while they were out or while they were in bed, so the house was even more vulnerable.

“We encourage people to install security alarms and to fit timer switches to their lights, but the most basic crime prevention precaution of all is to lock the door and close the windows, even if you are in the house.

“We are doing all we can to catch burglars and prevent crime but everyone should take on the responsibility of keeping their own home reasonably secure.

“We think the unusually warm weather has made people more careless. It may be comfortable to leave the windows slightly open, but you are making things really easy for the criminal and you may find that your insurance company will refuse any claim you make.”

Other advice to beat the burglar is as follows:

- When you are leaving the house, just look back for a few seconds and judge how it looks. Does it really appear empty or occupied? If switching a light on in one room would make a difference; take the time to go and do it.
- Invest in a timer switch or two and use it to leave lights and/ or a radio on when you go out. Make sure the timer operates a light that is normally on when the house is occupied.
- Make sure you close any curtains or blinds when lights are on so burglars do not get a bird's eye view of all the valuables in your house.
- Keep an eye open for anyone acting suspiciously in the area. Even an opportunist thief is likely to spend a bit of time weighing up a neighbourhood before committing a crime.
- If you are going away ask a neighbour or friend to look after your property. Remember you can always return the favour for them.

For further crime reduction advice contact Pat Breen on 01244 614779, or for Home Watch information, Jane Thirsk on 01244 612725