



Autumn Security Considerations

As darker nights roll in heralding the approach of winter here are a few things that you can consider and include in your general maintenance at this time of year that may make your home less attractive to thieves.

- **Put that light on!** - 31/10/21 the clocks go back, check and reset the time of your timer plugs, lights, and other security devices. Remember to a thief a house in darkness is empty. Some of the things you do to create the illusion you are in when your home is unoccupied are: - lights on in rooms that you would normally occupy, TV simulators, a doorbell that you can answer remotely on your smartphone.
- **External lighting and CCTV** - Make sure that external lighting and CCTV is working and clean.
- **Hedges, Trees and plants** - A consideration when gardening – most thieves like to work unobserved. Have your plants or shrubs grown and are they now obstructing CCTV or lighting, does it now prevent neighbours and passer-by's from seeing your frontage? If so a spot of pruning would be advisable, to the front it is recommended to keep hedges and shrubs to about 4' (1.2m) and with trees prune lower branches where suitable to allow that visibility of your property.
- **Sheds and gates** - keep them closed and locked when not in use, review and maintain the locks as required. Alarms on sheds and outbuildings are a good idea.
- **Property marking** - tools and lawn mowers going away for the winter, if you have not done it already make a note of the model and serial numbers and consider a property marking product.
- **Heating Oil** - with the value of fuel it is worth considering its security. In the more isolated parts of the countryside it is primarily domestic properties that have been targeted by the heating oil thieves, but we have also seen such thefts at farms and other businesses. There are several security devices available that will protect your fuel supplies - details of which can be found via your fuel supplier or local plumber's merchant. One such system is Tank Commander www.commandersecurities.co.uk which has "Secured by Design" accreditation <https://www.securedbydesign.com/> . Products like this will detect a dramatic drop in fuel and notify you by phone and/or audible alarm. There are also other similar security products that can add onto an existing intruder alarm system, whilst others may protect the filler cap and there are of course the conventional locks. Another consideration would be concealing it with landscaping and spiky planting around the tank, restricting access to it with gates or fencing, and where possible locating the tank under lighting in view of lived in rooms within the house.

If you would like further advice regarding security please look at the Essex Police website www.essex.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention/ and <https://www.securedbydesign.com/> .

Naturally we also ask you to report any unusual activity to police in an emergency on 999 or after the event on 101 or "Do it online" www.essex.police.uk/do-it-online/report-a-crime/ or to Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.