



While many people take steps to protect their homes, they often forget the value of the items stored outside.

Garden sheds, outbuildings and garages packed with tools, machinery and other valuable equipment offer easy pickings to thieves. Each year householders lose hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of equipment, which is easy to sell on and often untraceable.

By taking the right precautions you can reduce the opportunities for thieves and ensure that if your property is stolen, there's a better chance of it being traced and returned.

Here's how you can cut the risk of theft

- **Always put tools and equipment away safely** – items left lying around outside could be stolen or used to help a thief break in
- **Disable** lawn mowers and other large machinery when not in use and chain items together to a solid anchor point
- **Record** details of your property (make, model, serial number and identifying marks) on the form overleaf and take photographs of items for easy identification
- Use close shackle **padlocks** to secure sheds and install shed **alarms** and **security lights**
- **Register** your valuables on the National Property Database – www.immobilise.com
- **Security-mark** your property using a UV pen or a forensic marking solution
- Ensure the screws are not accessible when using a hasp and staple lock or pad bolts
- **Prevent** unwanted visitors from entering your garden by maintaining hedges and fences
- **Close** your garden gate and **lock** it from the inside
- **Use** lockable hanging baskets or secure the baskets to their brackets
- **Avoid** leaving house doors and windows open or unlocked when working in the garden

If you see it, report it

Neighbourhood Watch schemes are groups of volunteers who work in partnership with the police and the local council and play an important role in the battle against crime. They distribute advice on security and safety within a designated area and help to make sure that elderly or vulnerable members of the community aren't targets for criminals.

There are hundreds of Neighbourhood Watch schemes across Kent and Medway. To join a local scheme or for more information visit:

- www.kcnwa.org
- www.kent.police.uk/neighbourhoodwatch

Crimestoppers is an independent charity, which provides a way for people to give information about a crime without revealing their identity.

If you have information about a crime, call Kent Crimestoppers anonymously on **0800 555 111**. You won't be asked for your name, your call will not be traced or recorded and you don't have to give a statement or go to court.

Contact Kent Police

If a crime is in progress or life is in danger, call **999**.

For all non-urgent crime reports or enquiries, call **101**.

If you are deaf or speech impaired, text '**police**' then your message to **60066**.

For more safety advice, details of your neighbourhood team or to find out about policing priorities where you live, visit www.kent.police.uk

If you would like a copy of this leaflet in large print, another format or language call **01622 652158**.