



Tips for the Winter festive season



ourwatch.org.uk

Crime prevention tips from Neighbourhood Watch and Thames Valley Police for you and your family whilst out and about during the festive season.

1/ In bars, night clubs and pubs 'Ask for Angela' is an initiative to support people who find themselves in an uncomfortable and intimidating situation in public locations. By asking staff to 'ask for Angela' will discreetly extricate them or discreetly defuse the situation.

2/ Presents under the tree and unwrapped presents; make sure they are not visible from outside. At night draw curtains and if unoccupied use smart lights and lights on timers to give the impression someone is at home.

3/ Put rubbish out just before collection and fold cardboard boxes inside out and in the red bin. This is to give the opportunistic criminal less chance of knowing what valuable contents now reside in your home.

4/ Exterior festive lights which need electricity for their illumination can lead to windows or doors left ajar for the mains cable. Criminals know to look for this vulnerability. Get an outside socket professionally installed or go for battery or solar.

5/ Check doors and windows for weak spots. The Office for National Statistics 2020 reported windows were used to gain access in 30% of burglaries. Look at window locks, deadbolts and new hinges. 1 in 7 burglars also walked through an unlocked door. It's worth thinking about keeping your doors locked even when you are home.

6/ Don't advertise your plans. Social media channels can be used to scout for potential targets. Don't post that you'll be away or upload photos of what you received as presents. It just acts as a catalogue. Double check your privacy settings and if possible keep your profile private.

7/ If you are away over the festive period make sure you cancel any deliveries. Arrange for a trusted neighbour to park on your drive to again create the impression someone is home.

8/ Secure garages, sheds and ladders. Make sure tools and equipment are locked away. Consider even wheelie bins where they can be used to gain access to windows or accessible roofs.

9/ Don't hide your spare house keys. Burglars know all the hiding places. Give your spare keys to a family member or a trusted neighbour. If you have an alarm, make sure it is on when you are away.

10/ Make a note of the unique code, such as the serial number on equipment. Mobile phones have IMEI numbers. It can be found by dialling *#06#. Mark valuable items with your postcode and house number.

11/ Don't forget to join Neighbourhood Watch. First go to www.ourwatch.org.uk and sign-up to the all important local Police messages via email, to which you can reply. Secondly, do the postcode search under 'Find my local NW' and join your local scheme. Thirdly, if no scheme, draw a map of your area and apply to start your own. We will help you.



Wishing everybody a very festive season from the Milton Keynes Neighbourhood Watch Association.