

... securing your home in the winter months

When the nights draw in it's more important than ever to make sure your home is properly secure. This guide outlines ten tips to help you secure your home this winter.

1. Burglars don't tend to target homes that are occupied so use timers for lights and turn radios on if you are out of the house overnight.
2. Always draw your curtains at night and make sure valuable items cannot be easily seen from outside.
3. Visible burglar alarms and security lighting are great deterrents - just make sure your alarms are switched on when you're out and your security lights don't disturb your neighbours.
4. If you have security lighting, motion sensors or other equipment installed outdoors, test it on a regular basis. Severe weather can damage or destroy outdoor equipment, and you may not notice until it's too late.
5. Remember, if a burglar does get into your home then handbags, wallets, and house or car keys are obvious targets. Don't leave them in a prominent position such as at the bottom of the stairs, and keep your keys safely out of sight.
6. Make sure garden tools, ladders or anything else that could be used to break into your home are not left lying around. Garden walls, fencing, trees and shrubs may all help a thief break in without being seen.
7. Chain-link fencing, trellises and prickly shrubs all help deter burglars.
8. UPVC doors must be fitted with a three-point multi-locking system, while patio doors should be fitted with top and bottom key-operated bolts.
9. Neighbourhood Watch and other 'watch' schemes are an excellent way for communities to fight burglary. You'll find some home insurance policies give you a discount if you live in a Neighbourhood Watch area.
10. Unfortunately elderly people are easy targets, so consider getting elderly relatives a personal alarm.

But please always make sure that any security improvements you make to your house do not stop you getting out as quickly as possible if there is a fire!

Chris Lewis Fire & Security designs, installs and maintains a complete range of fire and security systems for residential and commercial customers. The company's experience, dedication to customer satisfaction and innovatively designed solutions are reflected in a host of industry awards, including both Best Security Installer and Best IT Initiative accreditation at the Security Excellence Awards.