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# News release

27 October 2011

## **Surrey Police launches campaign to reduce burglaries during the winter months**

Surrey Police has launched a campaign aimed at helping the county's homeowners avoid becoming victims of burglary during the winter months.

The county sees around a 33% increase in domestic burglaries between the months of October and December when the clocks go back and the evenings get darker.

The campaign, titled "Burglars take more than you think - Don't make it easy for them", includes a short film and radio adverts urging the public to protect their homes and possessions and not to make life easy for burglars.

The film features a young man, played by an actor, in a property you believe to be his own home. He's taking a drink from the fridge and sitting on the sofa as he works from his laptop. As he prepares to go out he places the laptop in its case, gathers his "belongings" - a gold watch, mobile phone and money - and heads for the kitchen draw to collect his car keys.

As he drives off the viewer sees how he came to be in the property in the first place as he is revealed as a burglar!

The campaign has a step by step guide for the viewer on how they can protect their homes and possessions as we see how the young man gained entry.

- Always lock back gates,
- Don't leave valuables on view,
- Never leave keys hidden outside,
- Always set your burglar alarm.

A radio advertising campaign will run alongside the film featuring the views of home owners after they discover they have been burgled. Actor's voices will portray the emotion and upset involved in having both sentimental and valuable items taken.

This campaign follows on from Surrey Police and Crimestoppers coming together to launch "Cash for information" to encourage the public to pass on information anonymously about burglars and the handling of stolen goods in return for a financial reward if an arrest and charge is made.

Temporary Detective Superintendent Maria Woodall said "As the clocks go back and it starts to get darker earlier, the number of break-ins goes up. It is known that burglars often target properties that appear to be unoccupied and therefore making sure your home looks and feels like someone is at home can be all that is needed to keep your belongings safe.

"Simple crime prevention measures can really make all the difference, such as leaving a few lights on and not having valuables in view from a window. The majority of burglars are opportunists, and if they have to make a lot of noise, spend a lot of time, or risk being seen, they are likely to go elsewhere"

Surrey Police is giving the following advice to help residents avoid becoming a victim of burglary as the winter months rapidly approach:

- Light up your house – inside and outside. If you are out or away, use timer switches to turn internal lights on and off.
- Make sure your doors are securely locked at all times.
- Close and lock all windows – burglars can wiggle through any gap larger than a human head.
- Fit locks at the top and bottom of patio doors.
- A visible burglar alarm will make a burglar think twice. Make sure you set your alarm every time you leave your house.
- Never leave garages or sheds unlocked.
- Fit and lock gates across side and back entrances.
- Be alert to strangers loitering in the street, If you don't recognise them and they are acting suspiciously, call the police.
- Don't hide your keys under a mat or a flowerpot – it's the first place a burglar will look
- Keep an inventory of your valuable property, either on paper or online with a company such as [www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com)
- Use a property marking product to uniquely mark valuable possessions. For more information visit [www.securedbydesign.com](http://www.securedbydesign.com)
- Beware of bogus callers. Use a door chain and check the callers identity carefully. If in doubt, keep them out.
- And finally, if a burglar does get into your home handbags, wallets and car keys are rich pickings so never leave these items in view.

**ENDS**