



WIRRAL HOMEWATCH

Safety advice for your Home, Vehicle and You

Published and distributed by

Mid-Wirral Crime Prevention Panel

Registered Charity No. 702343

in association with



Contents

Welcome to Mid-Wirral Crime Prevention Panel's safety publication.

Please read the booklet and we hope you benefit from the information it contains.

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Mid-Wirral Crime Prevention Panel

Registered Charity No. 702343

History & Objectives

The Panel was formed in 1987 and aims to identify crime related problems, to consider methods of tackling these and to undertake projects designed to assist in solving the problems. It is a self supporting registered charity and relies totally on income from local donations and from grants received from outside bodies to carry out its operations. Over the years, we have supported many local initiatives aimed at reducing crime and anti-social behaviour, and reducing the fear of crime within our neighbourhoods.

The Panel has a formal written constitution and is registered with the Charity Commission.

Area of Operations

We operate in the Mid-Wirral Area of Merseyside, in the North West of the UK. This area includes the villages of Barnston, Bebington, Brimstage, Bromborough, Eastham, Gayton, Greasby, Heswall, Irby, New Ferry, Pensby, Port Sunlight, Raby Mere, Storeton, Thingwall and Thornton Hough.

Membership

The Panel is made up of local volunteer members of the community from a variety of backgrounds and who work closely with Merseyside Police who provide technical advice, statistics and general support. We are always looking for volunteers to join us.

For more information please visit our website at www.mwcpp.org.uk

Home Security

Take a look at your home....see if you can notice how a burglar would enter.



Doors

- ❖ If your front and back doors are not secure then neither is your home. Keep them locked...even when you are at home.
- ❖ Keep all keys away from the door to prevent thefts via your letterbox.
- ❖ Never leave spare keys under a plant or house brick. Good quality key safes are available from DIY stockists.
- ❖ Most uPVC doors are 'LIFT & LOCK' when the handle is lifted turn the key before releasing in order to prevent the doors being popped out.
- ❖ French Windows are a target for potential thieves which can be combated with a simple bike lock. Anti-lift devices are available for Patio doors to stop them from being lifted from their tracks.



Windows

- ❖ Ensure all windows are locked, even at night.
- ❖ Locks are available for all types of windows and if visible from outside the property will deter opportunistic thieves from trying to enter.
- ❖ Keep all keys in a safe place.
- ❖ Louvre windows are especially vulnerable. Either glue the slats into place or fit a Louvre lock.
- ❖ Ask at your local DIY or glaziers for more information.



Security Systems

- ❖ If you have no security system fitted then contact a local recognised company for a free quotation.
- ❖ Both wired and wire free systems are available. DIY systems are also available from recognised retailers.
- ❖ If an alarm system is in place then please ensure it is well maintained.

- ❖ Visible burglar alarm signs and boxes can often deter a burglar.
- ❖ There are many new devices on the market for home security including video door bells that connect to a mobile phone to show who is at the door and you can speak the callers via your phone.



Security Lighting

- ❖ Security lighting can detract burglars at night, the last thing a burglar wants is to be seen. Lighting can be an inexpensive but very effective deterrent against potential thieves.
- ❖ Various styles of security lighting are available from welcome lighting to floodlights. Some internal lighting can be activated by plug in timer switches. This can be used whether you are in or out of the house. The plug in timer switches can also activate radios or other items to give the prospective burglar the feeling that the home is occupied when you are on holiday or just away from the home.
- ❖ There are security lights available that record automatically when the PIR (Passive InfraRed which detects movement) is triggered.



Property Marking

- ❖ It is good practice to list and mark items within the home, garage, car or personal items you may carry with you.
- ❖ Ultra Violet marking pens are widely available. Just write your postcode on the item followed by your house number such as NT42 9WA 7.
- ❖ Other ways of marking may be to engrave items or use Smart water or Selecta DNA to identify your items. (The Police may have some free markers available if you contact your local station.)



Safes

- ❖ Small home safes are ideal for containing valuable items, and are very affordable.
- ❖ Having more than one in different locations in the home is a great way to ensure items have greater protection.
- ❖ You can give each safe a different access code for even more protection.



Keys

- ❖ Don't leave keys near a front door, or in view of a window.
- ❖ Keep your keys safe by placing them out of sight.
- ❖ If you have a digital camera then take photos of all your items, list their serial numbers. This information can then be burned onto a CD or DVD and copies can be stored in secure locations, for example metal tins designed to look like household items such as tins of soup or beans etc.
- ❖ There are also signal blocking pouches that car keys can be left in to prevent car key signals being intercepted for keyless thefts.
- ❖ If you are worried about keyless theft, you can contact your dealership to ask for security advice.



Neighbourhood Watch or Homewatch

- ❖ Neighbourhood Watch or Homewatch schemes are a great way to look after neighbours around you. Check with your local Police force on how to join such a scheme or go online at: www.ourwatch.org.uk

Garages, Sheds and Gardens



Garages

- ❖ Garages are often a target for thieves. Most garages are full of equipment that can easily be sold on by a thief. Most tools are never marked and therefore would be untraceable.
- ❖ Try to lock all tools in boxes, then place the keys in a safe within the house.
- ❖ Garage alarms can be a great deterrent and battery operated systems can be obtained from good retailers.
- ❖ If the garage is connected directly to the house then ensure the connecting door is alarmed or fitted with a good quality lock, and ensure that the door is kept locked.



Sheds

- ❖ Sheds and other outbuildings are also targets for thefts. A shed, like the garage can contain items which can easily be sold on by thieves.
- ❖ Fit a good quality lock and bolt to your shed.
- ❖ Battery operated shed alarms can be purchased at good retailers and are very easy to fit.
- ❖ Consider fixing lockable steel boxes to your garage or shed floor to store your tools.



Gardens

- ❖ Gardens can be a place to relax, but also a place to hide for thieves.
- ❖ Make sure that all tools have been locked away when finished with. Shovels, spades and other items can be used to prise open doors and windows.
- ❖ If you have a set of ladders, ensure they are secured safely. Even if they are in a garage or shed, bolt them down or secure them by using a chain and lock.

Speak to your local crime prevention officer for more information. Merseyside Police can also provide Home Security Assessments for concerned residents. This can be arranged by contacting your Local Policing Team.

Personal Items



Personal Items

- ❖ Personal items such as mobile phones, cameras and mp3 players can be marked with an Ultra Violet pen, which when exposed to UV light will reveal a hidden message such as your postcode and house number. You may also wish to engrave your item.
- ❖ Most mobile phones have a tracking facility, to enable these to be located should they be stolen. Free and subscription tracking applications are available on the internet. Mobile phones and other similar equipment may be placed on a register at: <http://www.immobilise.com>
- ❖ If your phone, bike, computer or any other registered item is lost or stolen, you can use Immobilise to instantly tell police, insurers, and the second-hand trade. These actions will help greatly in the recovery of your property and the apprehension of thieves.
- ❖ Small bells which attach to your purse or handbag will help alert you if the item is moved without your knowledge.
- ❖ Cords or chains which attach to your purse and your handbag or other item are inexpensive ways to help discourage pickpockets from stealing your purse.



Credit/Debit Cards

- ❖ Ensure all cards are kept secure, keep your PIN a secret, and never tell anyone the number even if they call you claiming to be from the bank or any other organization. If you have more than one card, try to use a different PIN for each card. A good method to ensure this happens is by using the long number on the card, such as 1234 5678 0123 4567.
- ❖ Pick a number (say 2) then the second number of each block could be your PIN for that card so for the above 16 digit number, 2 would give us a PIN of 2615 Pick 4 and the PIN would be 4837.
- ❖ Count forward, backwards the choice is yours. Apply this format to all cards and as each card number is different, each PIN will be different.
- ❖ For cards that are contactless such as the Oyster Card and most Credit and Debit cards, there are products widely

available such as card holders and cards with built in signal blocking technology which help to stop unauthorised scanning and access to your personal details.

Cold Callers and Bogus Callers



Cold Callers

- ❖ If a cold caller comes to your door, if you have a chain, ALWAYS put it on before opening the door.
- ❖ ALWAYS ask the caller for ID. If the caller is legitimate then they will have an ID card with details for you to verify their identity. To check a caller is genuine you can look up the number on the internet or a recent bill and check it against the card the caller has given you. Do not just ring the number on the card – it may be fake. Callers will wait while you go and call their office for verification.
- ❖ Ask your service providers if they operate a password service.
- ❖ DON'T make any immediate decisions but think it over before you commit to agreeing and signing any contract. This will give you time to get other quotations from different companies.
- ❖ DON'T be afraid to say NO! You can always contact the local Trading Standards Office for advice, although you may have to do this by going through Citizens Advice Bureau.



Distraction Burglaries

- ❖ If you are suspicious about a caller then NEVER let them into your property.
- ❖ DON'T spend any length of time at your front door. Ask them to return when you have somebody else there.
- ❖ If you are suspicious then try to remember as much as you can about the caller, such as their appearance, clothing, any description of any vehicle they may be using and then inform the Police.

Download further information at: <http://thecrimepreventionwebsite.com/>

Suspect anything or anyone you don't know - no matter what or who they claim to be.

Ask questions. Whatever a fraudster tries, you have the power to stay in control.

Find out for certain who you are dealing with. Challenge anything that seems suspect.

End situations that make you uncomfortable. If you feel threatened, contact the police.

Cars, Motorcycles and Bicycles



Cars

- ❖ Manufacturer's car security is always improving but we all have a part to play in the security of our car and its contents.
- ❖ Never leave anything on show. Thieves will gain entry whichever way is possible, they don't care about the damage they cause. So please ensure you remove your Satnav and its holder. Any mobile phone holder that fits to a windscreen will leave rings on the glass. So, please try to wipe the screen once you removed the phone, satnav or other cradles.
- ❖ Always fold in wing mirrors to avoid accidental or malicious damage.
- ❖ Please ensure when parking that you double check that your car door is locked.
- ❖ Download further information at:
<https://www.merseyside.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention/keeping-vehicles-safe/preventing-car-vehicle-theft/>



Motorcycles

- ❖ Motorcycles are a target for both opportunist and professional thieves.
- ❖ Always secure the steering lock when leaving your motorcycle, even for a short time.
- ❖ Use a steel cable or chain lock to secure the motorcycle when leaving it for any length of time.
- ❖ Lock it to an immovable object with the anchor point higher than the bike as this makes it more difficult to cut the chain.
- ❖ Padlocks are available with built in alarms which sound if the lock is knocked or tampered with.
- ❖ Also using a cover has been found to be the simplest, cheapest & most effective deterrent against bike theft.





- ❖ The correct protective clothing should always be worn.
- ❖ Check your helmet for any signs of wear and tear.
- ❖ Any defects, rips or tears to your jackets or trousers could affect any protection they may give you in the event of an accident.
- ❖ Check gloves and footwear are suitable for your needs.



Bicycles

- ❖ Bicycles like motorcycles need to be secured when not in use.
- ❖ Bicycles can be engraved or stamped with a unique identifying number which can then be recorded. This will help the Police reunite the bicycle with its true owner in the event of any theft recovery.
- ❖ Don't forget to put the lock on even when storing the bicycle in the shed or garage.

Fire Protection



We never want a fire in our property, but if it happens we should all know what to do. Make a simple evacuation plan for your home and ensure that everyone understands what to do in an emergency.



Smoke Alarms

- ❖ Smoke alarms come in various forms. Most are battery operated and are easy to fit. Mains powered alarms are available.
- ❖ If you have a battery powered fire alarm, please test the battery regularly, and change it when necessary.
- ❖ Some alarms are fitted with lights which give the user emergency lighting when activated.
- ❖ If you are elderly or vulnerable, in some circumstances, Merseyside Fire & Rescue may fit a FREE alarm for you – particularly if they have fitted one for you before. Ring 0800 731 5958 to arrange a free Home Fire Safety Check and to ask for fire safety advice



Carbon Monoxide Detectors

- ❖ Items that can burn such as gas, oil, wood and petrol can produce Carbon Monoxide. It's not just gas boilers, fires, cookers and ovens that can produce this killer gas. Other items like mobile heaters, gas and oil fired boilers can also the produce Carbon Monoxide.
- ❖ Carbon Monoxide is tasteless, colourless and has no smell.
- ❖ Alarms are widely available and are easy to fit.
- ❖ As with smoke alarms, if it is battery powered, test and change the batteries when necessary.



Fire Extinguishers and Blankets

- ❖ Fire extinguishers and blankets are widely available and can cost very little. Whilst large fires should never be tackled by the occupier, these items are ideal for extinguishing smaller fires. **HOWEVER, IF YOU ARE UNSURE ALWAYS CALL THE FIRE BRIGADE.**

Download further information from:

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/groups/dg_digitalassets/@dg/@en/documents/digitalasset/dg_073993.pdf

Personal Safety



Away from home

- ❖ If you will be away from home on holiday, business, hospital treatment, whatever the cause, do secure your premises.
- ❖ Tell a neighbour or friend and give them a contact number for a key-holder of your property. Leave with them any specific instructions, should there be an incident in your absence. Ensure ALL windows and doors are secure. Make sure any deliveries such as milk or papers are cancelled. Ask somebody to check on your mail to make sure no post is sticking out of the letterbox.
- ❖ **DO NOT** post on social media, Facebook etc. that you are on holiday or give dates when you plan to go away. Once that information is posted others can see it.
- ❖ You can also contact the Neighbourhood Policing Team to let them know when you are away and for how long in case should there be any problems.



Going Out

- ❖ If you think you are being followed, head for a busy, well-lit place. Stay away from dark quiet areas. If you are attacked, scream and make as much noise as you can. Carry a small personal alarm if you feel threatened. Try to avoid any confrontation by walking or running away. If you have to use force, only use enough to get you out of danger.
- ❖ Avoid using cashpoint machines when you have been drinking as you are likely to be more vulnerable when you have consumed alcohol. Always shield the keypad when typing in your PIN number and do not let people in the queue assist you as they may be trying to steal your card, money or card details.
- ❖ Download further information at:
<https://www.merseyside.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention/personal-safety-how-to-stay-safe/>



online security

Stay Safe Online

Online security has become one of the major crime issues of the 21st century. There are people out there who use YOUR vulnerabilities and lack of awareness to use the internet to either steal your identity, hack your bank account, make fraudulent purchases in your name, or even hold you to ransom by freezing up your computer or online device.

Please use the following tips to protect yourself, your data, your bank details and your identity from online fraudsters.

1. Keep Personal Information Professional and Limited

Potential employers or customers don't need to know your personal relationship status or your home address. They do need to know about your expertise and professional background, and how to get in touch with you. You wouldn't hand purely personal information out to strangers individually—don't hand it out to millions of people online.

2. Keep Your Privacy Settings On

Marketers love to know all about you, and so do hackers. Both can learn a lot from your browsing and social media usage. But you can take charge of your information. Both web browsers and mobile operating systems have settings available to protect your privacy online. Major websites like Facebook also have privacy-enhancing settings available. These settings are sometimes (deliberately) hard to find because companies want your personal information for its marketing value. Make sure you have enabled these privacy safeguards, and keep them enabled.

3. Practice Safe Browsing

You wouldn't choose to walk through a dangerous neighbourhood—don't visit dangerous neighbourhoods online. Cybercriminals use lurid content as bait. They know people are sometimes tempted by dubious content and may let their guard down when searching for it. The Internet's demimonde is filled with hard-to-see pitfalls, where one careless click could expose personal data or infect your device with malware. By resisting the urge, you don't even give the hackers a chance.

4. Make Sure Your Internet Connection is Secure

When you go online in a public place, for example by using a public Wi-Fi connection, PCMag notes you have no direct control over its security. Corporate cybersecurity experts worry about "endpoints"—the places where a private network connects to the outside world. Your vulnerable endpoint is your local Internet connection. Make sure your device is secure, and when in doubt, wait for a better time (i.e. until you're able to connect to a secure Wi-Fi network) before providing information such as your bank account number.

5. Be Careful What You Download

A top goal of cybercriminals is to trick you into downloading malware—programs or apps that carry malware or try to steal information. This malware can be disguised as an app: anything from a popular game to something that checks traffic or the weather. NEVER download apps that look suspicious or come from a site you don't trust.

6. Choose Strong Passwords

Passwords are one of the biggest weak spots in the whole Internet security structure, but there's currently no way around them. And the problem with passwords is that people tend to choose easy ones to remember (such as "password" and "123456"), which are also easy for cyber thieves to guess. Select strong passwords that are harder for cybercriminals to demystify. Password manager software can help you to manage multiple passwords so that you don't forget them. A strong password is one that is unique and complex—at least 15 characters long, mixing letters, numbers and special characters.

7. Make Online Purchases From Secure Sites

Any time you make a purchase online, you need to provide credit card or bank account information—just what cybercriminals are most eager to get their hands on. Only supply this information to sites that provide secure, encrypted connections. You can identify secure sites by looking for an address that starts with *https*: (the S stands for *secure*) rather than simply *http*: They may also be marked by a padlock icon next to the address bar.

8. Be Careful What You Post

The Internet does not have a delete key. Any comment or image you post online may stay online forever because removing the original (say, from Twitter) does not remove any copies that other people made. There is no way for you to "take back" a remark you wish you hadn't made, or get rid of that embarrassing selfie you took at a party. Don't put anything online that you wouldn't want your parents or a prospective employer to see.

9. Be Careful Who You Meet Online

People you meet online are not always who they claim to be. Indeed, they may not even be real. Fake social media profiles are a popular way for hackers to cozy up to unwary Web users and pick their cyber pockets. Be as cautious and sensible in your online social life as you are in your in-person social life.

10. Keep Your Antivirus Program Up To Date

Internet security software cannot protect against every threat, but it will detect and remove most malware—though you should make sure it's to date. Be sure to stay current with your operating system's updates and updates to applications you use. They provide a vital layer of security.

Keep these 10 basic Internet safety rules in mind and you'll avoid many of the nasty surprises that lurk online for the careless.



Keeping children safe when they go online

Other issues involving the internet include keeping your children safe from predators. There is a wealth of information online to help you manage your childrens' internet experience. Visit <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/talking-child-online-safety/>

Useful Telephone Numbers and Websites

Merseyside Police Emergency: 999

Non-Emergency: 101

<http://www.merseyside.police.uk>

Twitter: @MerPolCC

Facebook: Merseyside Police CC

Merseyside Fire Emergency: 999

<http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk>

Twitter: @Merseyfire

North West Ambulance Service Emergency: 999

Non Emergencies: 111

<http://www.nwas.nhs.uk>

Twitter: @NWAmbulance

Facebook: nwasofficial

Crimestoppers 0800 555 111

<https://crimestoppers-uk.org>

Twitter: @CrimestoppersUK

Facebook: CrimestoppersUK

Home Office

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office>

Twitter: @ukhomeoffice

Facebook: UK Government

Age Concern 0800 169 6565

<http://www.ageuk.org.uk/>

Twitter: @age_uk

Victim Support 0808 168 9111

<http://www.victimsupport.org.uk/>

Twitter: @VictimSupport

Facebook: Victim Support

Mid Wirral Crime Prevention Panel www.mwcpp.org.uk

Wirral Borough Council **0151 606 2000**

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/about-council/contact-us>

Telephone Contacts

- Arrowse Park Hospital **0151 678 5111**
- Clatterbridge Hospital **0151 334 4000**
- Victoria Central Hospital (Mill Lane) **0151 678 7272**
- St Catherine's Health Centre **0151 514 2888**
- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Team **0151 606 2020**



Join the Mid Wirral Crime Prevention Panel

The Panel is made up of local volunteer members of the community from a variety of backgrounds. We are an independent community organisation and we work closely with Merseyside Police who provide technical advice, statistics and general support. We meet 6 times per year to discuss ways in which we can make a difference within our community.

If you have some time to spare and would like to get involved in supporting your community, we are always seeking to recruit new members to our panel. If you're up to the challenge, please contact us by visiting our website <https://mwcpp.org.uk/contact-us>.