

Stay safe this summer

hints and tips...

helping you to **minimise** claims



With a little thought to security, you can keep your home and possessions secure this summer.

Safeguarding against burglary

Unsurprisingly August is the busiest holiday month in the UK with more than 7 million people holidaying abroad and millions more travelling to holiday spots across the UK.

With 43% of burglaries being committed when a property is empty, it's worth putting in a little effort to deter would-be thieves.

Don't advertise your house is empty

- Don't put your holiday plans on Facebook & Twitter or announce that you are away on answer machine messages
- Cancel milk & paper deliveries
- Don't let post pile up – consider using Royal Mail's Keep Safe service
- Don't leave curtains drawn – instead move valuables out of easy sight of windows
- Create the impression you're at home with security timer switches which turn on lights and radios automatically.

Protecting your main building

Entry, in around 20% of all household burglaries, is via an unsecured door or window. Even the most basic security measures will help to deter burglars.

- Make sure windows are secured by key operated locks and doors with locks that meet BS3621 security standard
- Consider security lighting that will illuminate anyone coming close to your property
- Alarms really do make burglars think twice
- Register your valuables on www.immobilise.com - a free online database that enables you to record the serial numbers and descriptions of your valuables. It helps the police to identify any recovered property and return it to you.



Don't forget the shed!

The value of property kept in sheds and outbuildings is ever increasing. The content also provides would-be burglars with all sorts of tools that can help them gain entry to the main property and the means for a quick getaway. Keep these buildings secure by:

- Concentrating on external entry points – consider using deadlocks and a locking bar with close shackle padlock on sheds and garage doors. Fit grilles/bars to windows and consider painting or covering windows to hide any attractive equipment or furniture from view
- Securing tools and ladders so that they cannot be used to break into the main property
- Paying special attention to high value mobile items – if you're leaving your car, take the keys on holiday with you or leave them with a trusted neighbour. Keep bikes covered so they are not visible from windows. See over the page for more advice on bike security.

Summer parties

Birthdays, anniversaries – we Brits will find any excuse for a good party. Follow these tips to make sure your summer get-together goes without a hitch.

Bouncy castle safety

Kids love a bouncy castle, but government statistics indicate that every year they are the cause of thousands of accidents. If you're planning to hire one this summer:

- Hire it from a reputable company (one which complies with the bouncy castle guidance issued by the PIPA Inflatable Play Inspector Scheme) and wherever possible get the company's staff to set it up, operate it and supervise it.
- Don't allow children to use it if there is a high wind or in wet weather as inflatables can flip over and slippery surfaces can cause injury.
- Ensure that the blower is situated at least 1-2 metres from the inflatable – serious injuries may occur if a user strikes the blower unit.

For more advice on the use of bouncy castles visit www.ecclesiastical.com/bouncycastlesafety

Protect your property

Whilst you're in the back garden enjoying your barbeque, who's letting themselves in through your front door? It might seem easier and more welcoming to keep the door open for your guests but you're inviting trouble if you don't keep your doors locked.

Barbeque best practice

A barbeque should be a safe and enjoyable experience but it's all too easy to be distracted when you have friends and family around you whilst cooking. To avoid injuries or damage to property, follow these simple precautions:

- Ensure the barbeque is on a flat site, well away from a shed, trees or shrubs
- Keep children, garden games and pets well away from the area
- Never leave the barbeque unattended
- Keep a bucket of water or sand nearby for emergencies
- Ensure the barbeque is cool before attempting to move it.

For more advice visit www.fireservice.co.uk/barbecue

Cycle security



With summer comes lighter evenings and mornings and (fingers-crossed) better weather, so it's not hard to see why cycling sees a surge in popularity at this time of year. But with 533,000 bikes being stolen every year*, a little thought given to security can help keep your bike safe.

- Get a good bike lock (D locks or combination locks are best. Look for 'Sold Secure Ltd' approved locks, or ask for a recommendation at a bike shop).
- Lock your bike to something secure, eg a bike rack or a lamppost. Always lock it, even if you are only leaving it for a couple of minutes.
- Make the lock and bike difficult to manoeuvre when parked: keep the lock away from the ground and keep the gap between the bike and lock small.
- Have your bike's frame security-marked or engraved.
- Register your bike: register your bicycle model, make and frame number. Contact your local police station for further advice.
- Take a clear colour photograph of your bike and make a written record of its description, including any unique features.
- Keep your bike in a secure garage or shed and keep the door locked.

This advice is taken from Crimestoppers. Visit www.crimestoppers-uk.org for more information.

*Source: The Guardian, 8th May 2011

Flood damage prevention

Sadly in Britain, summer doesn't always equal sunshine and some of our more catastrophic weather events have happened at this time of year. If you live in an area prone to flooding here are some tips to minimise the devastation caused by floods.

Preparation

- Sign up for Floodline Warnings Direct by calling Floodline on **0845 988 1188** or by visiting the Environment Agency website.
- Prepare a flood kit of essential items such as a broom, spade, mop and bucket; domestic detergent and disinfectant; rubber boots, gloves and protective clothing; waterproof torch and radio; bottled water for drinking.

During a flood

- If floodwater is about to enter your building, turn off the gas, electricity and water supplies if it is safe to do so. **DO NOT** touch sources of electricity when standing in flood water.
- Gas and electricity supplies should remain switched off until a qualified professional has checked the system thoroughly. Wiring, appliances and pipe-work should also be inspected for safety and efficiency.



After a flood

- Do not throw away any items until your insurer or their loss adjuster tells you it is OK to do so.
- Make a list of any damaged items that you need to throw away before you dispose of them. Take a note of make and model numbers, and take photographs of any damage if you have a camera to hand.

For more flood advice visit:

The Environment Agency:

www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Ecclesiastical Insurance:

www.ecclesiastical.com/flood-advice

