

Keeping Keys Safe in Your Home

No matter how sophisticated the security systems that have been installed, it is likely that somewhere along the line a key is needed to get into a property.

Keeping keys safe is, therefore, a vital part of home security.

If householders do not protect their keys and this leads to a theft or burglary it is possible that any subsequent insurance claim could be compromised – the insurer may take the view that the policy holder contributed to the theft by their carelessness.

House Keys

When moving into a new home the most exciting moment will often be as the new owner holds the key in their hand and feels it turn in the lock for the first time.

In the midst of their reverie householders rarely pause to ask themselves - how

many other people have turned the key in this lock before?

Or even – who else might have a key for this door?

The first thing to do upon moving into a new home is to change the locks on any external doors.

Once a householder walks through their front door and hears it close behind them it is easy to feel safe.

The natural thing to do is to leave keys somewhere near the front door – there may even be a hook or a special bowl where they always go.

However, this is exactly what burglars expect people to do.

By fishing through the letter box with a hook, keys left near the front door can easily be retrieved and stolen.

Leaving keys in the lock is

inadvisable for similar reasons.

This is particularly risky if the front door has a glass panel either in it or near it: the glass can easily be broken and a burglar can reach in and grab the keys.

Spare Keys

A spare set of house keys should never be left under a flower pot or the door mat or any of the other obvious places.

This is exactly where any burglar will look if they are trying to work out just how easy it might be to break into a property.

Labeling Keys

House keys should never be labeled with the householder's address.

If keys are labeled and lost, any dishonest person who finds them will know exactly where to go for an easy burglary.

It is possible to label keys in different ways so that they have an identifying feature and some means of contacting the person to whom they belong.

Some household insurers provide policy holders with a key fob bearing a unique code number and a telephone number operated by the insurance company.

If the keys are found by someone who calls the number, they can easily be reunited with their owner.

Leaving Keys with a Neighbor

If householders have a trusted neighbor, a spare set of keys could be left with them.

When the householder is away the neighbor could also pop in to pick up any mail and make the property look more lived in.

When neighbors are prepared to keep an eye on each other's properties this has a positive effect on the sense of well being and safety within a

community.

Again, if keys are left with a neighbor, householders must make sure that the keys are not labeled with the property's address.

Car Keys

Special care should be taken to keep car keys safe.

When at home, car keys should not be left near the front door; just like house keys these can easily be fished through the letter box.

With the car conveniently parked outside, this is virtually an open invitation to car thieves.

Car keys should never be left in an unattended vehicle.

It would only take a matter of moments for a thief to get into the car and drive off.

In addition a spare set of keys should never be "hidden" in the car.

If a car is stolen after being left with keys in it, it is highly likely that the

insurance company will refuse to pay for the loss because the owner will be deemed to have contributed to the theft.