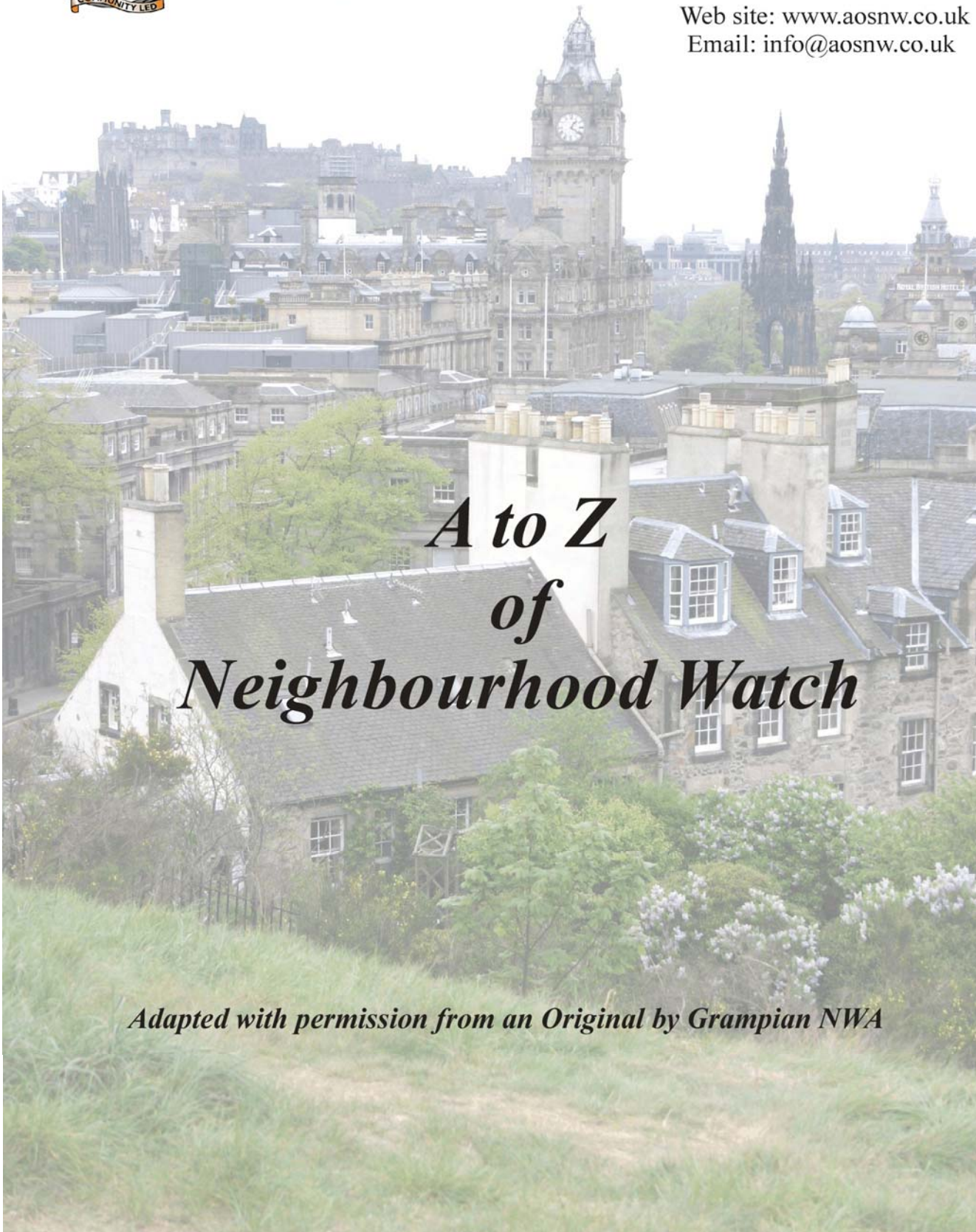




AoSNW

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*A to Z
of
Neighbourhood Watch*

Adapted with permission from an Original by Grampian NWA

THE A TO Z OF NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

. The essentials of house and locality security.

ADVICE ON NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH is FREE! Just contact the Association of Scottish Neighbourhood Watches www.aosnw.co.uk . or your community Police Officer. For a free house security survey contact your local Police Office

ASBO's Antisocial Behaviour Orders.

These are Scottish Executive initiatives operated by Local Authorities and the police. They cover almost anything done by anyone which conflicts with the right of citizens to live peaceful and constructive lives. Excessive noise, disturbance, vandalism, and so on. Collect all relevant information about the individual/s concerned and full details of your complaint. Then contact your Local Authority .

BOGUS CALLERS.

Be wary of all doorstep CALLERS. If you are suspicious, warn your neighbours by phone and contact your Police Service Centre.



BUILDINGS

Take many forms, from flats to garden sheds. Each building and outhouse should be regarded as unique, security wise. Sheds and garages are prime targets. What do you keep in yours? To get a feel for how secure a building is, look at it as if you were a thief. How would you go about stealing from it?

CALLERS

Collecting for a Charity: Collectors should have an official sealed can and carry identification a Certificate of Authority' signed by an official of the charity, which must be produced on request. Take care ID cards can be easily forged.



CALLERS

Collecting for Themselves: Is a form of begging. Be polite but cautious. Take care ID cards can be easily forged.

CALLERS

Offering GOODS: Beware! It may be stolen goods! Even if it isn't, prices are usually excessive.

CALLERS

Offering Services: Prices are often exorbitant, the work often shoddy or even dangerous. If you need a tradesman, ask around or use a phone book. Get at least three quotes. And remember you have seven days to cancel. If they 'happen to be in the district' they'll be in another district tomorrow and your money will too.

Each district has one or more COMMUNITY POLICE OFFICERS. who deal with community policing issues.

CCTV

Closed-circuit TV with a PIR can interrupt TV viewing if someone approaches the house.

CRIME BULLETINS

Crime bulletins are available on the police web sites or from your local Police Station

CRIME AND THE FEAR OF CRIME".

Neighbourhood Watch strives to reduce both of these by advising all residents.

COST Membership of NW is free. A Watch may suggest a small voluntary donation from each member to cover its costs. Your discount on house insurance may increase!

CRIMESTOPPERS (0800 555 111).

receives information on crimes and criminals from individuals who wish to remain anonymous, perhaps because they are afraid of retribution. Otherwise call **999 in an emergency.**

DISABLED residents in a watch must be given as much, (if not more than) consideration, as:-

ELDERLY residents in a Watch, although often reluctant to join NW initially, can be its most valuable members. Usually at home during the day, they are aware of what is going on in the street and can alert neighbours or the police to anything suspicious. However, they are also the most vulnerable, being considered easy prey by thieves who might suspect them of having rge sums of money in the house.

EMERGENCY?

If you see someone smashing a door or window to gain entry, vandalising a car, or starting a fire, or anything similar, DIAL 999, the 'Crime in Progress' number.

EXPENSE.

UPVC doors and windows? Security Alarm? Floodlights?

But protecting your property needn't cost the earth.

TIMER SWITCHES cost around ten pounds for three.

Remembering to lock doors and windows, keep ladders chained, lock that garden shed securely, cut hedges to 1 metre in height The basic precautions are cheap and may be all that is needed. Do you have NW stickers at front and back? - They come free.

FENCES & HEDGES

mark your boundary, but it is unwise to make their height more than 1 metre high. If a passer-by or neighbour cannot see over or through your fence, or hedge, a thief can climb over - use this as cover - and take his time breaking in to the house.

FLATTED ACCOMMODATION

Points to watch are: Communal Doors: Make sure the locks work. Don't peg doors open. Don't admit strangers. Close any communal doors behind you, especially if you see a stranger approaching. Keep cupboards locked. Don't let rubbish accumulate. Fit a strong door with hinge bolts and strong mortice locks.

GARDEN



Thieves are not keen on struggling through barbed shrubbery. A couple of rose bushes by a vulnerable window is defensive as well as attractive. 'Berberis' is also effective, as are brambles!

A HOUSE IN DARKNESS is one most likely to attract a thief.



TIMER SWITCHES attached to lamps and set for when the house is in darkness are simple deterrents.



While we remember to set timers when we are out in the evenings, many break-ins occur between the hours of 8-10am and 3-6pm, particularly in winter.

A GARAGE may have a connecting door to the house, so the garage door should be as secure as the front and back doors.

Some cars have security systems which cannot be 'hot wired'.

Thieves therefore break into houses just to get the car keys!

If you let someone into your **HOME** and then feel uncomfortable, phone a neighbour to come and be with you.

IDENTITY THEFT

is a crime committed using your personal details without your knowledge. In *MONEY LAUNDERING*, a bank account is opened in your name. Cash is deposited in that account and later withdrawn as cash with different banknote numbers. Remove all personal details from any paperwork you are putting in the bin. See www.identitytheft.org.uk
Paper shredders are inexpensive.

INSURANCE

Some insurers give NW members a discount of about 10% on the 'contents' premium of members of active Watches. Ask next time you renew your policy.

Note - Policies purchased on the Internet may not have this discount but are probably cheaper anyway.

JOBBERS

Be suspicious of workmen who 'happen to be in the district.' Tarmac layers and tree/bush pruners often charge exorbitant rates. Never pay in advance. If you feel intimidated, phone the **Police Service Centre**. If you want work done, get three written estimates. Even after accepting a quote, you have seven 'Changed my mind' days to cancel the agreement if work has not started.

KEYS

Door Keys: Never leave a key in a lock.

A common method of breaking in is to smash a glass or other panel of a front or back door, reach in, and turn the key. However, just in case there is a fire, keep a key in one place somewhere near the door. If a key is to be held by a neighbour, mark it with a pseudonym, not your address!

When locking up, don't leave keys in doors. A cat flap can sometimes be reached through to get at a key.

KEYS Window Keys:

Some types of window can be locked a fraction open. This should only be used on upper storey windows and when somebody is in the house.

LADDERS

are not the sort of thing a thief is likely to take to work with him. A ladder from a back garden is ideal for the thief to access an upper window in the house or any neighbouring house. Keep it securely chained against a wall or fence.

LANES

are a handy way for thieves to pass through a district without being noticed.

They also give handy access to properties - a fence or hedge is no obstacle to a determined thief. Beware of leaving other 'climbing aids' such as wheelie bins or garden benches where they can be used to reach upper windows.

LIGHTS OUT? - YOU'RE OUT! – a campaign conducted each autumn to remind householders that winter darkness persists after they have gone to work, and returns before they return. Lit rooms give an impression of a house which is not empty, but not if they are on all day! **TIMER SWITCHES** are the answer!



They can be set to switch on and off periodically. A set of three can cost just £10. Having a neighbour close and open curtains to make a house look occupied is no substitute for timer-controlled lights. A good additional security measure is the 'dusk-to-'dawn' light. A timer can also power a radio set to a talking channel.

LOCKS - DOORS

External doors for front, back and side of a house should be robust, with secure locking and strong hinges. Five-point locking is advised. The door should be wholly compatible with the door frame and firmly secured to it. When considering replacing a lock with a better one, consider also replacing the door with a stronger door!

LOCKS - WINDOWS



Wooden- frame windows often have a simple lever handle for opening. Locks with a key can be fitted quite easily. UPVC windows have handles with built-in locks. Keep such keys out of sight.

MAIL.

If it is possible to see mail or newspapers lying behind a door, ask a trusted neighbour to go in and move it.

NEIGHBOURS

It is a duty of all Neighbourhood Watch members to keep an eye on neighbouring properties. (Just one unprotected house may attract thieves to the street).

NEIGHBOURLINESS

goes hand in hand with NW. When a neighbour is away, we keep an eye on things, and vice-versa.

NEWSLETTERS

are a convenient way of keeping residents informed about local security issues and news.

NO NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH?

If a Watch has not yet been set up for a street all that is required is for a resident to contact your liaison officer or access AoSNW web site for guidance.

NO EMAIL?

If a co-ordinator does not have email access it is best to ask a neighbour who does have email to receive bulletins and other NW information and pass it on.

NOISE

Workmen repairing houses or digging streets can make a lot of noise. Thieves can use this to mask their own breaking-in at doors or windows. Thieves don't like gravel on paths or drives because of the noise it makes when they approach a house!

PATIO DOORS.

During either of Scotland's fine sunny days, these open out to let the sun and fresh air into the house. They can also let thieves in. A garden spade or similar can be used to lever a section from its mounting. Special fittings, purchased cheaply, can prevent this. Remember to keep garden tool sheds securely locked!

PATROLLING THE STREETS

IS NOT done by Neighbourhood Watch.

PERSONAL ALARM



These devices can give one a feeling of security when out and about. Some incorporate a torch. When the alarm is activated it emits a deafening screech which scares off any assailant and attracts attention. Another useful application is: - attached to a door or window. If either is forced the alarm goes Note: the majority of personal attacks are against males aged 17-27.

PHOTOGRAPHY

We are advised against whipping out a camera every time a 'suspicious' person appears. That could be an infringement of privacy. You should, however take photographs of valuable personal property which cannot be security marked (e.g. jewellery or porcelain figures. They should be recorded for size against a coin or ruler.)

PIR

Passive Infra-red devices detect movement. Normally fitted to lights, alarms or CCTV

A PROPERTY LIST

Will help with an insurance claim if you have suffered a break-in or other theft. It will also help the police investigation.

'PROXIMITY SENSOR' LIGHTS

come on if someone moves within a few yards of them. They are best fitted on the back, side, of a house or garage. Motion-sensitive floodlights are very effective deterrents. But annoyance can be caused if they are over-sensitive or are triggered by swaying greenery. At a main door, sensor lights of lower wattage are handy for identifying callers.

REAR OF A HOUSE

is the thieves favourite point of entry. Do not go behind a neighbour's house to investigate noises, or challenge a stranger who is acting suspiciously. Always phone the police

RELAX! if you have made your home secure and well lit. Go to work, go on holiday, or go shopping, happy in the knowledge that all the basic precautions have been taken. The houses which are stolen from are usually those which have poor security arrangements.

RENTED ACCOMMODATION stands as secure as the *owner* makes it. A tenant is unlikely to spend money on alarms, UPVC, &c, but simple precautions can be just as effective.

REPEAT VICTIMS

It is a fact that a house which is stolen from once will probably be targeted again. The thief will now know the layout of the house and have planned an escape route. Bulkier items which he could not remove on the first quick visit will attract him back. Tighten up on security quickly!

REPS

NW Co-ordinators are the representatives of a Watch and acts as links between the local association, residents and NW liaison. They relay relevant information both ways. Deputy Coordinators help co-ordinators in fulfilling their role, especially in large Watches. There might be several Deputies.

'**RESTRICTING**' advice about locking doors and windows can seem a nuisance, especially if crime happens rarely. However, it is the precautions we take that keep crime away! It may take some time and effort to cultivate good security habits, but soon they will become automatic.

RISK

A resident must never ever put him/herself at risk by getting involved in a situation. The police are trained to respond correctly and safely.

SAFES,

not drawers, are the most suitable places for keeping spare cash, cheque books, jewellery, credit and bank cards.

Elderly people are regularly reported in the press as 'Robbed of their Life Savings'. This encourages thieves to target this group of people. Try to persuade them to keep any significant sum in a bank.

A SECURITY ALARM

will deter most thieves from even considering a property as a target. Statistically they are the best form of protection. They cost from £30 upwards for a DIY set. Check firms' pricing carefully, particularly the post-installation and maintenance charges before signing anything. Minimise the nuisance of false alarms by giving a trusted neighbour a key and a note of the alarm cancellation code, or install a 24 hour control room monitored alarm. A dummy alarm box can have a limited effect. Update the police data bureau when the house is to be empty, also details of the key holder.

SECURITY MARKING



It is important to mark all your valuables, (using an ultra violet pen) with your house number and postcode. Marking serves several purposes. (a) If stolen, your property can be easily identified and returned to you. (b) If caught red handed the police can link the thief to the crime. Pens are available from your NW Co-ordinator or the police.

SECURITY PRODUCTS

If unsure about which security products you should use, speak to a reputable locksmith, DIY store or local Neighbourhood Watch Association.

SIGNS

House NW Signs, Front and rear windows close to doors are good places to display NW stickers. Also on windows of garden sheds and outbuildings.

SIGNS of an empty house:

Wheelie bins left in the street (Good NW neighbours take them off the pavement). - House in darkness (Use timer switches or dusk-to-dawn lights). - No car in the driveway. Ask a neighbour to park there when you are on holiday.

Milk bottles left at the door; visible mail and newspapers behind the front door (Give a trusted neighbour a key?)

SIGNS

Street Signs

'This is a Neighbourhood Watch Area' are fitted to warn thieves that the residents are vigilant and have taken steps to protect their property.

SPEED

is essential to thieves. They can be in and out before, you have an inkling anything is up. **PREVENTION** is your best defence!

STREET

Which house in a street would a thief select? Perhaps –

First choice: a house without an alarm, dog or child.

Second: one with a downstairs window open or loose.

Third: one in darkness.

Fourth: one with a panel which can be easily broken, giving access to the door or window key.

Fifth: One where he can work unseen.

STREET LIGHTS

are the first effective deterrent to crime. **REPORT FAULTY STREET LIGHTS TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITY SUSPICIOUS** character hanging around? Give him a cheery Hello and a wave! If he really is a thief, he'll move on. If he's not, he'll think what a nice friendly street it is!

Still worried? Report your suspicions to the Police straight away The police need all the information they can get. A simple description or van registration may foil a thief. If a call doesn't lead to anything, the police don't mind at all. And remember, thieves are desperate not to be caught! The mildest interest in their presence may be sufficient to discourage them.

TARGET HARDENING

A house which has been targeted once will probably be targeted again. Any weaknesses should be corrected, and extra protection added. Elderly people are very vulnerable to exploitation by bogus workmen. Worse still, much less than 1% of them report the crime. If such an incident is discovered, Target Hardening is essential, and the police and social services must be alerted.

THIEVES

are: those who break in, Con-men, Bogus Charity Collectors, Bogus Workmen, Opportunist Thieves, and Garden Thieves. Some accomplices are female!

TIMER SWITCHES



Study the installation instructions before purchasing, in order to choose a suitable type. They can be connected to lamps and radios.

They are cheap and give the impression that a house is occupied when it is not. TV sets are generally not compatible with timers.

Set a radio to a 'talk' programme to give the impression that someone is at home.

VALUABLES

Keep valuable jewellery in a bank, not in your house. A thief is unlikely to steal your washing machine, but CDs and DVDs and players, cameras, jewellery etc are easy to take and sell. Compile and keep updated a list of movable valuables - type, make, serial, description, etc.



Use a UV invisible marker pen to write your house number and postcode on the back or underneath of each item. Small items, such as jewellery, should be photographed with a digital camera (and a 50p piece or ruler alongside!). Keep the disc and list of items in a safe place. You will also be helping the police if items are recorded in this way because it can help a prosecution as well as the return of stolen items. For help obtaining pens, contact your NW rep or the police. If unmarked items are stolen, it may be a very long time before they are recovered.

VEHICLES

are sometimes used by criminals. Take careful note of the registration number and description of unfamiliar cars and vans parked in the street. Vans, such as the anonymous blue or white Transit type, without a firm's logo on the side, should be noted. Be suspicious, for example, if you see furniture being carried from a house whose occupants are away on holiday!

WHEELIE BINS

left in the street long after collection will make a thief think that the house is empty. Do the neighbourly thing and take them off the pavement when you collect yours. Waste paper collections - Putting out cardboard boxes may announce to neighbours that you have a brand new DVD player (for example). A passing thief may also be quite interested.

WHY

Do males aged 17 to 37 want to break into our homes?

Often it's to steal things which they can sell for cash to buy drugs. Being caught is a disaster for them, as they can then no longer obtain the drugs.

WINDOWS

Two sheets of glass ('double glazing') are better than one. If a UPVC unit is fitted from the outside of the frame, make sure the mounting is thief-proof. (Consult the supplier, because some are not!). Don't leave a downstairs window open unless you are continually in the room.

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