

Distraction Burglary

Distraction burglary is when a trick or con has been used to gain entry to a property rather than force or sneaking in. Although anyone can be tricked into letting in a bogus caller, elderly people especially women in their 80's are the most common target. Jewellery and cash are the usual items the distraction burglar is after.

Distraction burglary appears to be an organised crime, carried out by gangs of people who plan and research their targets and the area they are going to hit beforehand. Those carrying out such crimes can appear very charming, friendly and genuine. Although a common trick is to say they are from the water board, any numbers of cons are used such as pretending to be meter readers, council workers, estate agents or even young children claiming they are looking for a lost dog or ball.

Victims of distraction burglaries often don't tell anyone what has happened, perhaps through embarrassment or a feeling of just wanting to forget it. However, it is important to report these crimes, even if the bogus caller was not successful in gaining entry - it will help the Police in trying to catch these gangs and may prevent it happening to someone else.

To help protect yourself or your relatives against distraction burglary: -

- Be suspicious of all callers - If someone calls at your door & you do not know who they are or you are not expecting them, **DO NOT** open the door
- Keep front and back doors & windows securely locked at all times - even if you are expecting someone.
- Don't keep large amounts of cash at home - use a bank account instead.
- Look after you pension book carefully.
- Don't open the door - talk to callers through a window.
- Set up passwords with utility companies. If the caller doesn't know your password then they are not genuine.
- Don't use tradesmen who call offering to do work.
- Avoid buying or selling any goods or services at the door.
- ID cards are easy to reproduce so don't trust them. A genuine caller will not mind waiting while you check identification & contact their company however **DO NOT** let them in whilst you check their identification. **DO NOT** ring the number on the caller's card as this might be fake - instead find the phone number in the phone book or look on your last bill.
- Fit a door chain & spy hole.
- RING 999 immediately if you have received a visit from anyone about whom you are suspicious.

REMEMBER - IF YOU'RE NOT SURE, DON'T OPEN THE DOOR

Doorstep Crime Action Network (DAN)

Doorstep Crime Action Network was launched in September 2009. The scheme aims to bring together members of the public, private, public, charity and community sector organisations in relation to doorstep crime.

DAN is asking anyone who has contact with an elderly or vulnerable person to pass on the gentle crime prevention reminders to help prevent them from becoming a victim of doorstep crime.

If you have any suspicions or concerns that doorstep rogue traders or distraction burglars are operating in your community or targeting someone you know, please contact the dedicated doorstep crime hotline: **0345 23 07 702**

For further information regarding the Doorstep Crime Action Network and crime prevention advice, go to www.northants.police.uk/lookout

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Door stickers available from nhw@walgrave-village.co.uk or your NHW coordinator