

# Security advice for churches, places of worship and associated buildings

The following considerations are designed to help reinforce security for churches and other places of worship, or associated buildings, which could be considered targets for crime particularly during a period of reduced footfall.

Most of this advice requires basic items to help improve security, but some may require specific products. We are aware that there will be fewer hardware shops, builders merchants and DIY shops open at present and some may be working limited hours. We recommend checks should be carried out to determine what is available and attainable before considering implementing any physical measures. In addition, any target hardening measures must not harm the fabric of the church, place of worship or associated buildings.

**Food banks, community halls or storage areas:** Non-standard storage units such as these may be considered easy targets with limited security. Alarm systems, better padlocks (see below), encouraging regular footfall from local dog walkers (within government guidance) and reinforcing strong communication links both online and with immediate neighbours can help, and is the preferred advice. External storage compounds require strong surveillance opportunities, ideally with a well-designed and padlocked gate with plenty of surveillance so a vehicle or person accessing it would be seen clearly. Where this cannot be achieved, CCTV can help. Delivery areas will need to be accessible and deliveries should be arranged to arrive early to allow time to secure goods before leaving at the end of the day.

**Improve local contact:** Consider whether there are neighbours or people that pass by regularly who would notice and report any suspicious behaviour, for example dog walkers, joggers or people accessing other businesses/car parks near by. Contact with these groups or signage around the premises may encourage them to report any suspicious activity.

**Building works:** Ideally there should be no building works at this time. Having clear signage, with a contact number for queries and a notice confirming that no work is being undertaken, could help encourage neighbours to report any concerns if workers appear to be on site during periods of closure, particularly at night.

**Access control:** Whilst the church or place of workshop is closed, all vehicle entrance and exit routes must be secured, ideally by lockable full-height gates with anti-lift hinges. Make sure external areas are clear and tidy with clear demarcation to show public and private areas. Secluded, dark, cluttered and hidden areas should be avoided, restricted or opened up. Delivery areas will need to be accessible. Avoid leaving any combustible materials, packaging or gas bottles outside.

**Boundaries:** The boundary walls and fences should be in good condition and minor damage should be repaired. Remove items near the boundary that could be used for climbing and block off any recesses if possible. Any loose flints, stone or bricks should be refixed or removed to storage to avoid theft or further criminal damage. Be mindful of secluded areas which could be used to hide stolen items in. Wheelie bins should be secured away from the boundary to a wall or ground anchor.



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**Lighting:** External lighting should be left on when dark to help deter criminals. Manually controlled or dusk-to-dawn are best, ideally not PIR (motion sensor). Where natural surveillance is difficult, other means of surveillance should be used, for example CCTV. Lighting should be in good condition, working and unobstructed. CCTV should be monitored and in good working order. Recording storage equipment should be secured and kept out of sight.

**Padlocks:** These should be in good working order, of disc design, closed, straight or hidden shackle, or shrouded. Long shackle padlocks must be avoided.

**Church or place of worship building:** Ensure all doors, frames, locks and windows are in good repair. Check who has keys or access codes and change codes if appropriate. Fix any damage. Shutters and security grilles should have no gaps around them and no handles or fixings exposed that could be used to gain access.

If you have an alarm, make sure it is operational with a suitable policy for authorised people close by to check immediately if it is triggered. If installing a new system, we strongly advise that the supply and fitting companies meet Secured by Design/NSI standards.

**Lead:** Any lead should be marked or have a forensic marking/DNA-style treatment with plenty of signage (this should come with the product and more can be obtained if missing or damaged) on display. This signage should be placed on notice boards, down pipes and in other suitable spaces to help deflect someone climbing up to steal – even if unsuccessful, the climbing could cause damage. Anti-climb paint can also be used to deter climbing, provided it is no lower than two meters and is accompanied by appropriated signage.

**Interior:** Remove or secure tools that could be used to commit crime. Alternatively secure them somewhere safe.

Consider securing any other valuable or perceived valuable items or moving them into storage. Do the same for charity cash boxes, which can attract thieves. Consider keeping an inventory with photographs.

Check what can be seen through any windows and remove items that might attract crime.

**Management:** Formal, agreed access procedures can help ensure security is maintained. Any incidents of concern should be recorded and kept locally for the church or place of worship contact to assess. A record of repairs should also be kept.

It might be worth creating a chat group for appropriate members to use if they notice anything suspicious or require access. The group should also confirm who and what the chain of reporting is. Lone worker devices can be used if they meet BS 8484:2016 and are IP67 rated.

Ensure any groups that meet regularly are aware of the current rules and don't access the church without permission, but are encouraged to check the building if they live locally and want to take their approved exercise in the area.

Further information:

- Appropriate Diocese or Ecclesiastical contacts should be informed and as many have suitable advice and their advice will be appropriate for the Church, its structure, fabric, insurance and the age of the building.
- [www.securedbydesign.com](http://www.securedbydesign.com) is a police initiative which provides guidance on designing out crime and crime prevention.
- [www.soldsecure.com](http://www.soldsecure.com) is owned and run by the Master Locksmiths Association, a not-for-profit trade association, which offers a selection of approved products.
- For more crime prevention advice visit [www.kent.police.uk](http://www.kent.police.uk) .