

STEER CLEAR OF CARAVAN CRIME

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A guide to keeping your caravan secure

SECURITY ADVICE

You know how valuable your own home is to you. You know how important it is to keep it secure. And imagine the feeling of loss and frustration you'd have if a thief broke in.

But what about your caravan? On holiday or touring, you rely on it as your home. Think how you'd feel if somebody broke in or stole it.

Your caravan is a target for thieves. Whether it's on a site, parked in your driveway or you're just stopping for a short time in a lay-by or a motorway service station, it's important to protect it.

A lot of caravan crime is the result of criminals seeing opportunities and taking them. But you can easily outsmart the thief by following the simple advice given in this leaflet.

Remember, most caravan crime is preventable.

Don't give criminals an easy ride.



SECURITY CHECK

SECURITY DEVICES

Immobilise your caravan, even when you stop only briefly. Make sure your caravan can't be towed away by following these simple tips.

- Lock the coupling head into a cover using a good-quality hitchlock. Hitchlocks give a reasonable degree of protection from the opportunist thief.
- Use locking-wheelnuts and a good-quality clamp on the caravan wheels.
- Think about securing each corner steady by using a good-quality padlock and make sure it has a short shackle to prevent thieves from cutting through it.
- If you use a chain, make sure it's a strong, heavy-duty one.
- You may also want to have a tracking device fitted, allowing the police or system operator to track the caravan if it is stolen.



Make your caravan secure. You can take the following simple steps to stop thieves breaking into your caravan.

- Have a reliable alarm fitted and remember to turn it on whenever you leave your caravan, even if it is only for a short time.
- Always close doors, windows and any rooflight when you leave your caravan - even if it's only for a short time.
- Always lock your caravan and take your keys with you. At home, always keep your caravan keys in a safe place which is out of sight and away from windows and doors.



You can get more information about caravan security devices by phoning the Sold Secure Helpline on 01327 264687.

SECURE MEASURES

PROTECT YOUR BELONGINGS

- **Don't leave anything valuable on display.** Even an old coat on a seat is a temptation for someone to 'smash and grab' - they steal first and think about value later.
- **Take all your valuables with you when you leave the caravan.** If you can't, lock them in a cupboard out of sight, as thieves will look for and take advantage of every opportunity. To be really sure, think about having a specialised caravan safe fitted.



Never leave any of the following on display in your caravan. These are all particularly attractive to thieves. Also, never leave CRiS registration documents or purchase receipts in your caravan. They could help a thief to sell it on.

Mobile phones

Laptop computers

Credit and debit cards

Cheque books

Cash

Private mail, especially with your address on it



SECURITY MARKING

Security marking helps the police to identify and return stolen caravans or their contents to their rightful owners, and can put off thieves.

Since 1992 all National Caravan Council (NCC) recognised manufacturers have stamped the 17-digit vehicle identification number (VIN) onto the vehicle chassis and etched it into the windows. If your vehicle is not marked in this way, have your chassis number etched onto all your windows. Consider marking your chassis number or postcode inside cupboards and in other places inside your caravan with a permanent marker pen and keep a note of these places. It may help to identify your caravan if it is stolen.

Consider marking all your valuables, especially those that you often take in your caravan. Mark items with your postcode or some other unique identifying number linked to a recognised database (which keeps to the Loss Prevention Council (LPC) standards 1224 and 1225), and keep a note of any serial numbers in a safe place. This should help the police to return your belongings to you if they are stolen and recovered. It also helps to convict criminals.

The crime prevention officer at your local police station should be able to provide more information about marking schemes.

Keep a note of these identifying numbers and the places where they have been marked in your caravan, along with photographs of your caravan and its interior fittings. This information will help the police identify your caravan if it is stolen.



SECURE PURCHASE

STOLEN GOODS

A lot of stolen items are sold on to the public. If you are offered a 'bargain', you could, without realising, be buying something that has been stolen. Stick to reputable shops and dealers.



CRIMESTOPPERS
0800 555 111

If you have any information about criminal activity, particularly concerning stolen caravans or items stolen from caravans and then sold to the public, you can contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111. You do not have to give your name.

BUYING A NEW CARAVAN

Always ask about built-in security when you buy a new caravan. Your dealer and manufacturer will be pleased to discuss additional security options with you.

Since 1992, information on all touring caravans manufactured by NCC members has been registered with the Caravan Registration and Identification Scheme (CRiS) - a national register for touring caravans in the UK. CRiS was set up by the NCC to give touring-caravan keepers their own registration system, similar to the DVLA system for cars. It provides a logbook system with an exclusive history and checking service for touring-caravan keepers and dealers and is the only UK database for checking the history of a caravan.



All caravans produced since 1992 by NCC members are recorded at CRiS by their unique vehicle identification number (VIN). This VIN and the caravan description are recorded on the Touring Caravan Registration Document, which is sent by CRiS to the caravan's registered keeper.



All caravans manufactured since August 1997 are electronically tagged for added security.

Ask your dealer whether the caravan comes with any extra security features such as an alarm or tracking device, caravan safe, hitchlock or wheel clamps.

BUYING A SECOND-HAND CARAVAN

Never buy caravans in pub car parks or motorway service stations. If you are meeting the seller at a house, **always** check that it is their home as thieves have been known to use the driveway of an empty house to sell stolen caravans.



Also, **always** check the following when buying a second-hand caravan privately.

- Check that the caravan chassis number has not been removed or altered. If you have any doubts, contact your local crime prevention officer.

SECURE PURCHASE

- Before buying privately, consider checking the caravan's history on CRiS (you can find details in the 'Contacts' section). There is a charge for this service but a quick phone call to check the status of the caravan you are thinking of buying could save you a lot of problems later on, so it is a worthwhile investment.
- Is the seller insisting on meeting you away from home, possibly to avoid being identified or traced? If so, why?
- Can the seller provide proof of identity and address?
- Check that all the caravan keys are available and correct
- Check that the numberplate is the same on the caravan and the tow car. Be wary if temporary or handwritten numberplates are being used.
- Ask about any security devices that may have been fitted to the caravan by the seller.
- Ask the seller whether the caravan is registered with CRiS. If it is, ask the seller to fill in the Notification of Sale section on the back of the Touring Caravan Registration Document and send it to CRiS. The seller should then give you the rest of the Touring Caravan Registration Document and you must fill in the Notification of Changes section and send it to CRiS with the appropriate registration fee.



You may also want to check with both major caravanning clubs to reassure yourself that the caravan has not been previously stolen if you have any doubts about the seller.

Register your caravan

If the caravan you have bought is not already registered with CRiS, you may want to give serious thought to registering your caravan and having it electronically tagged, as this will help the police to identify and return your caravan if it is stolen.

SELLING YOUR CARAVAN

Don't forget the possibility of fraud. Thieves have used stolen cheques to buy caravans from unsuspecting owners.

Never part with your caravan until the cheque has cleared your account.

Remember to tell CRiS about the change of ownership by filling in the Notification of Sale section on the back of the Touring Caravan Registration Document.



SECURE CARAVAN

ON SITE

Always try to use a police-approved secured caravan park whenever possible. These have gained a police 'Secured by Design' award for security features which lessen the opportunity for crime to take place and offer a safer and more secure environment for you and your caravan.

The crime prevention officer at your local police station will be able to give you information about any secured caravan parks in your area.



GET TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOURS

Keep an eye on each other's caravans and get to know who belongs on the site. Don't be afraid to report anything suspicious to the site manager or the police.



WHEN YOUR CARAVAN IS NOT IN USE

Remember, your caravan is even more vulnerable when it is not being used. Caravans left on sites, storage compounds and even on your driveway are particular targets for thieves.

But wherever it is, **immobilise your caravan** using quality wheel clamps or a security post fitted near the front of the 'A' frame and the main body (or both).

Remove all your personal belongings and contents when you are not using your caravan. Leave cupboard doors and curtains open - thieves can be put off by a caravan that is obviously empty.

Store your caravan securely. If you are choosing a storage site, don't just look at the price. Check to see that it offers good security measures. Remember, if you can enter the storage area and remove your caravan without being approached, then so can a thief.

If you're leaving your caravan at home, ask a neighbour to keep an eye on your caravan as well as your house. And consider fixing good-quality security posts on your drive to prevent your caravan being stolen while you are not there.



CONTACTS

CRIME PREVENTION OFFICERS - you can contact a crime prevention officer at your local police station for crime prevention advice and information on secured caravan parks.

THE NATIONAL CARAVAN COUNCIL - for information about the Caravan Registration and Identification Scheme (CRiS).

Catherine House, Victoria Road
Aldershot, Hants GU11 1SS

Phone: 01252 318251

Fax: 01252 322596

Website: www.nationalcaravan.co.uk

E-mail: info@nationalcaravan.co.uk

THE CAMPING AND CARAVANNING CLUB

- for crime prevention advice leaflets.

Greenfields House, Westwood Way
Coventry CV4 8JH

Phone: 02476 694995

Fax: 02476 694886

Website:

www.campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk

CARAVAN REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION SCHEME (CRiS) -

for a check on the status of a second-hand caravan or information about registering or tagging your caravan.

HPI Ltd, Dolphin House, PO Box 61,
New Street, Salisbury,
Wiltshire SP1 2TB

Phone: 01722 411430

Website: www.crischeck.com

THE CARAVAN CLUB - for crime prevention advice leaflets and information about stolen caravans.

East Grinstead House

East Grinstead, West Sussex RH19 1UA

Phone: 01342 326944

Fax: 01342 410258

Website: www.caravanclub.co.uk

E-mail: enquiries@caravan-club.co.uk

SOLD SECURE - for a list of recognised security products.

Phone: 01327 264687

Website: www.soldsecure.com

E-mail: admin@soldsecure.com

CRIMESTOPPERS

Vehicle crime is the biggest single criminal activity in the UK. If you have any information on caravan crime, please call the freephone number (you do not have to give your name).

Crimestoppers Trust

Apollo House, 66A London Road

Morden, Surrey SM4 5BE

Phone: 0800 555111

Website: www.crimestoppers-uk.org

You can find useful crime prevention advice, on the crime reduction website at **www.crimereduction.gov.uk**

You can also find this leaflet and other useful advice on vehicle security at **www.secureyourmotor.gov.uk**