

# CHURCH SECURITY



FIRST PRINCIPLE

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**NORFOLK**  
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*Our Priority is You*



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## Top Tips

- **Lock your church at night**
- **Store small valuable items away when not being used**
- **Photograph all property**
- **Empty the offertory box daily**
- **Fit an intruder alarm /CCTV**
- **Engage with neighbouring residents to be your ears and eyes**

**The design and function of a church or place of worship makes general security more complicated but there is a great deal can be done at modest expense.**

**Today, criminals have become specialists, often with a good knowledge of church furnishings and their value, including art or church antiques. The rise in value and the increase in demand for these items have made church property a desirable target.**

**This information applies to churches of all faiths.**

**The following top tips can be used to reduce the risk of theft from your Church or place of worship.**

- Lock the building at night. Also lock your gates if possible
- Store small valuable items in a locked vestry, cupboard or safe when not in use during the week.
- Altar ware and valuables – wooden or base metal substitutes should be displayed and the originals locked away. They can be returned for services and events. Valuables which are not in regular use should be deposited in the bank or kept off-site.
- Consideration should be given to discreetly chaining antique furniture and other valuables to floors or walls. This may not deter the determined thief but may be sufficient to prevent the opportunist criminal.
- Wall hangings and paintings should be secured to the walls, ideally using non return security screws. This removes the ability for offenders to just lift off or unscrew items to steal.
- Keys should be kept by a responsible person in a secure place away from the building.
- The vestry should be secured by at least two good quality locks, fitted  $\frac{1}{3}^{\text{rd}}$  up and  $\frac{1}{3}^{\text{rd}}$  down on the door, this will increase the resistance of the door to leverage. All locks should conform to BS 3621, or higher, specification. Windows should have robust bars fitted.
- All property should be photographed and an up to date inventory kept. This must be stored in a safe place away from the building. All photographs must have a ruler or coin in the picture to indicate size.
- The offertory box should be properly secured and emptied daily. A notice should be displayed on the box indicating this.
- Vulnerable stained glass windows can be protected externally by black powder coated stainless steel window guards.

## **Roof and rainwater downpipes pipes**

Lead roof coverings are often the main targets for thieves.

There are many products you can consider to protect your roof covering including the following:

- Security marking with an approved DNA liquid
- Specialist roof alarm systems
- Replacement of lead with alternative materials
- Lead Security Fixings

If the lead on the church roof is marked with a forensic security product i.e. Smartwater or Selecta DNA, please mark large areas of lead and display the appropriate signage clearly and prominently. Keep signs in highly visible, well-lit areas.

Historic England are now more flexible when it comes to replacing roof coverings and will often approve a faux product that looks and ages the same but has nil scrap value. Stating this could prevent an attempt.

## **Lighting**

The use of effective security lighting is very important, particularly for isolated buildings or vulnerable areas. Your Architectural Liaison Officer can advise on the type of lighting. The installation of dusk to dawn sensors is recommended.

## **External doors**

All doors should be substantially made with strong hinges and effective frames.

Locks should, in all cases, be 5 lever mortice deadlocks that meet BS3621.

## **Cellars**

Cellar entrance doors should be properly secured in a similar fashion to the main entrance door with approved five lever locks or a close coupled padlock on a hasp and staple.

## **Gates**

Gates should be fit for purpose, easy to open and close and one hinge should be fitted upside down to prevent gates being lifted off. Engraving the Church's name on the gates can also act as a deterrent.

## **Intruder Alarms and CCTV**

The presence of an alarm system or CCTV is very often sufficient to deter the would-be criminal even before beginning to plan the crime.

An alarm substantially reduces the time available to the criminal to commit the crime.

Alarm systems or CCTV can be designed to the requirements of individual buildings and surrounding grounds. When sourcing an alarm

then use a company that is NSI or SSAIB accredited.

**National Security Inspectorate (NSI)**  
[↗](#)

**Security Systems and Alarm  
Inspection Board (SSAIB)** [↗](#)

### **Suspicious Activity**

Any suspicious activity in or around the church should be reported to the police. For non-emergency reports use call 101 if however a crime is in progress please report using 999. For all reports relating to potential lead theft please quote Operation Einstein.

## **Security Checks**

Regular or daily internal and external security checks should be implemented by the church warden or a nominated member of the parish. All criminal damage or attempted theft should be reported.

## **Self-Assessment**

Please complete the following self-assessment questions to check the security of your building.

## Church & Places of Worship Security Self-Assessment

Name of Church	Date of Assessment	Y/N	Assessor
Has any one person been designated to be responsible for security?	Consider making this a role for one of the team.		
Are fences, hedges and gates in a good state of repair?	Look at the perimeter to see if security improvements can be made. Where possible restrict vehicle access to the property.		
Are all external doors fitted with good quality robust locks?	Where practical and possible 5 lever mortice locks should be fitted to British Standard BS3621 or BS 8621. Fitting locks to UPVC, wooden or metal doors are a specialist field and it is recommended that specialist advice is sought from a locksmith. <a href="http://www.locksmiths.co.uk/">www.locksmiths.co.uk/</a>		
Are opening windows fitted with locks?	Window design varies considerably and specialist advice may be required. Secured by Design standards provide good guidance. <a href="http://www.securedbydesign.com">www.securedbydesign.com</a> .		
Does your property require being lit at night? If so is it adequate?	The type of lighting depends on the location. Dusk to Dawn Lighting is usually recommended. The Architectural Liaison Officer will be able to offer more advice if required.		
Is CCTV used for vulnerable areas?	Consider installing CCTV to provide additional formal surveillance to any vulnerable areas of the property. Consideration must to be given to ensure that lighting does not adversely affect the CCTV system.		

Are all key holders recorded?	Do not leave any keys on the premises. Signage and details of persons to contact in an emergency should be displayed		
Do you have an up to date inventory and photographs of all contents?	It is essential to record details of all items. Photographs are ideal following a theft. Keep them safe, away from the property and up to date.		
Your Offertory box, is it emptied daily?	A notice should be displayed to indicate this.		
Are Stained glass windows protected?	Vulnerable stained glass windows can be protected externally by black powder coated stainless steel window guards.		

### **What access availability do you want to adopt**

Are any parts of your building left open when unattended and at night?	Discuss the need for this with your staff, users, or parishioners. Would it be practical to have a key safe? Could you have a mobile phone contact to allow access outside opening times?		
Are there adequate signs?	Signs will set rules, inform people of opening times or how to request entry outside opening times.		
Have you considered a Watch Scheme?	The Local community can be your eyes and ears. Encourage them to report anything suspicious to the police.		

### **Valuable Items**

Do you lock small valuable items in a secure place when not in use during the week?	Is your secure place really secure? Do you need to make improvements? Your Architectural Liaison Officer can advise.		
Are your small valuable items property marked?	Overt marking is preferred as it is visible, however covert marking with a DNA solution can be used for valuables.		

Are valuable personal items identified and registered on the National database “ <b>Immobilise</b> ”?	Register valuable items at <a href="http://www.immobilise.com">www.immobilise.com</a> a national property database the police can search facility. This is a free service. Once registered the owner of a device can be verified.		
<b>Artifacts</b>			
Do you display original Artefacts?	We recommend that you display wooden or base metal substitutes wherever possible. Originals can always be reinstated when required.		
<b>Antique Furniture</b>			
Do you have antique furniture?	Consider discretely securing valuable furniture to the wall or floor. This may not deter the determined thief but it may slow them down and it will deter the opportunist thief.		
<b>Outbuildings</b>			
Do you have outbuildings?	Each building needs to be assessed individually and the level of security will depend very much on the contents.		
<b>Metal Theft</b>			
Does your property have lead or other metal roofing materials?	This is perhaps the most vulnerable area and desirable to thieves due to its high value.		
Is access to the roof easy and or secluded?	Look carefully at potential access points and take measure to make access more difficult.		
Has all metal been marked with DNA liquid?	Consider marking all metal with DNA liquid. Mark large areas of lead roofing		
Are roof alarms installed?	There are many types of roof alarms available and advice can be obtained from NSI or SSAIB accredited installers.		

# First Principle: Related links

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## Ask the Police

Official Police Resource. The Ask the Police website provides you with information on a wide range of non-emergency policing matters.

[askthe.police.uk](http://askthe.police.uk)

## Secured by Design

Official UK Police initiative that combines the principles of 'designing out crime' with physical security.

[securedbydesign.com](http://securedbydesign.com)

## Sold Secure

Dedicated to reducing the risk of crime by assessment of security products.

<https://www.soldsecure.com/>

## Crimestoppers

An independent charity that gives people the power to speak up to stop crime 100% anonymously, by phone 0800 555 111 or online.

<https://crimestoppers-uk.org/>

## Victim Support

Covering the whole of Norfolk and Suffolk, a free, confidential support service specifically designed to help victims and witnesses of any crime.

Contact us on:

Phone: 0300 303 3706 (weekdays between 8am-5pm)

Email: [nsvictimcare@victimsupport.org.uk](mailto:nsvictimcare@victimsupport.org.uk)

Web: [www.nsvictimcare.org](http://www.nsvictimcare.org)

Socials: @nsvictimcare

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Call us on 101. Always dial 999 in an emergency

**To see the full range of information go to:**

[suffolk.police.uk/firstprinciple](http://suffolk.police.uk/firstprinciple) or

[norfolk.police.uk/firstprinciple](http://norfolk.police.uk/firstprinciple)

Or alternatively use your mobile phone to scan this QR code.

