

Norfolk & Suffolk Crime Prevention

Guidance Note

Church Security



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 with genuine and often 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.

The Interior

The following measures can be taken to reduce the risk of theft.

1	Lock your church at night.
2	Store small valuable items in a locked vestry, cupboard or safe when not in use during the week.
3	Altar ware – wooden or base metal substitutes should be displayed and the originals locked away. They can be returned for services and events.
4	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.
5	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.

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6	Valuables should be kept in a safe or a strong room when not being used for a service. Valuables, including communion plates, which are not in regular use should be deposited in the bank or kept off-site.
7	Keys should be kept by a responsible person or in a secure place away from the church.
8	The vestry should be secured by at least two good quality locks, fitted 1/3 rd up and 1/3 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.
9	All property should be photographed and an inventory kept. This needs to be stored in a safe place away from the church. All photographs must have a ruler or 50p coin in the picture to indicate size.
10	The offertory box should ideally be emptied daily. A notice should be displayed on the box indicating this.
11	Vulnerable stained glass windows can be protected externally by black powder coated stainless steel window guards.

The Exterior

Hedges

Hedges can be very effective barriers and difficult to penetrate. Choose something like hawthorn, privet, holly, yew, laurel etc.

Roof and rainwater downpipes pipes

Lead roof coverings are often the main targets for thieves

There are many things 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 your churches roof lead is marked with a forensic security product i.e. Smartwater or Selecta DNA, please ensure that large areas are marked and the appropriate signage is clearly and prominently displayed. All too often a small or faded sign is

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displayed in an area of the church which a potential offender would not necessarily see.

Historic England (formally known as English Heritage) 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, It's wise to put up a sign to this effect to educate any potential offender but just one touch will show him/her that it is not lead.

Lighting

The use of effective security lighting is very important, particularly for isolated buildings or vulnerable areas. Your Crime Reduction Officer can advise on the type of lighting and where it would be best placed. You could consider the installation of dusk to dawn sensors.

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

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.

Suspicious Activity

If you witness any suspicious activity in or around the church please report this to the police. For non emergency reports use call 101 if however a crime is in progress

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please report using 999. For all reports relating to potential lead theft please quote Operation Einstein.

Self-Assessment

Complete the below self-assessment questions to check how good / bad your churches security is:

Churches Self-Assessment				
Name of Property	Date Assessment Carried out	Names of assessors		
Question	Advice	Y	N	Action
General Security				
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 carefully 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 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. www.locksmiths.co.uk/			
Are opening windows fitted with locks?	Window design varies considerably from one building to another and specialist advice may be required. Try to aspire to Secured by Design standards wherever possible and practical.			
Does your property require being lit at night? If so is it adequate?	The type of lighting very much depends on the situation and could be no lighting, dusk to dawn or PIR or a combination. The Crime Reduction Officer will be able to offer more advice if required.			

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Is CCTV used for vulnerable areas?	Consider installing CCTV to provide additional formal surveillance to any vulnerable areas of the property. Lighting is an important addition to CCTV. Consideration must to be given to ensure that lighting does not adversely affect the CCTV system.			
Are all key holders recorded?	It is inadvisable to leave any keys on the premises			
Do you have an up to date inventory and photographs of all contents?	It is very helpful if you record details of all items. Photographs are particularly helpful following a theft. Make sure you keep them safe, away from the property and up to date.			
If you have an Offertory box, is it emptied daily?	A notice should be displayed to indicate this			
If you have stained glass windows, are these 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, customers 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 Crime Reduction Officer can advise.			
Are your small	Overt marking is preferred as it is visible,			

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valuable items property marked?	however covert marking with a DNA solution can be used for valuable items.			
Are valuable personal items identified and registered on the National database “Immobilise”?	Register valuable items at www.immobilise.com This is a national property database to which the Police have a search facility. This is a free service. Once registered the owner of a device can be verified.			
Artifacts				
Do you display original Artefacts?	We recommend that you display wooden or base metal substitutes wherever possible. Originals can always be reinstated when required.			
Antique Furniture				
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.			
Outbuildings				
Do you have outbuildings?	Each building needs to be assessed individually and the level of security will depend very much on the contents.			
Metal Theft				
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			
Are roof alarms installed?	There are many types of roof alarms available and advice can be obtained from NSI or SSAIB accredited installers.			

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If you have answered 'NO' to 5 or more of the questions or have any concerns regarding your security, then please contact using the contact details at the bottom of this page.

Further Information can also be obtained from the following links:

Padlocks	http://securityforbikes.com/products.php?cat=Padlocks http://www.soldsecure.com/search-by-approval-category/
Church watch Manual	http://www.ecclesiastical.com/churchmatters/index.aspx
Lead Free Flashings and lead alternatives	http://www.icopal.co.uk/Products/Bitumen_Roofing/FormFlash_Lead_Free_Flashings.aspx http://www.ubbink.co.uk/Themes/Ubiflex-non-lead-flashing-(1).aspx http://www.seamlessroofing.co.uk/lead.html
Lead security fixing	http://www.ledlok.co.uk/
Forensic Marking	https://www.selectadna.co.uk http://www.smartwater.com/
Specialist roof alarms	http://www.compoundsecurity.co.uk/security-equipment/church-security-systems http://www.perimetersecurityltd.co.uk/church-roof-alarm.html

If you would like a free crime reduction survey of your church to review your security please use the contact information at the bottom of this page.

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