

FIRST TIME BUYERS WARNED NOT TO SHUN SECURITY

With the start of the springtime home buying surge just around the corner, property prices may be the deciding factor for many prospective first time buyers, but with more than 750,000 homes¹ burgled last year, **Lloyds TSB Insurance** is warning that security is one consideration that should not be left to chance. With figures showing that young people and homes without security measures are most at risk, those moving for the first time should pay particular attention to securing their properties.

Lloyds TSB Insurance has the following advice for first time buyers, to help them ensure their homes are as secure as possible:

- Think like a burglar and ask yourself the following questions: are there high walls or shrubs obscuring the front of the house, do the windows have locks, is there a burglar alarm or security lighting there any aspects you don't like such as a secluded alley at the end of the garden?
- The back door can be particularly vulnerable. Make sure it's made of toughened glass, if glazed, and that it bolts at the top and bottom.
- Have an intruder alarm fitted.
- Don't leave anything a burglar could use to break in lying in the garden - for example, ladders or step ladders.
- If you have a garden shed, lock it with a combination lock.
- Look after your keys. Do not leave a spare key hidden outside the house and make sure you only give spare sets to people you can trust. Never label keys with your surname or address.
- Make sure you check door and window locks meet insurers' minimum requirements and if you're concerned, it may be worth replacing the front door locks.
- Put off potential burglars by growing thorny plants up against the house.

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- Contact the crime prevention unit at your local police station – they will check that your new home is secure and recommend extra safety measures.
- Make sure you get insurance before you start to move into your new home, so that you'll be covered during the move itself.
- Once you've moved in, don't leave anything outside (e.g. empty boxes) which might help burglars work out what valuables you have inside.
- Get to know your neighbours and consider joining your local neighbourhood watch scheme.

Phil Loney, managing director Lloyds TSB Insurance, said: "Buying a home for the first time is stressful enough without having to worry about the threat of being burgled. First time buyers however are likely to be targets for property thieves – all the evidence shows that its young people and those that have only lived in a property for a short time that are most at risk.

"It's clear that homes without adequate security measures are the most common targets for property crime, so first time buyers should take note and ensure they've put in place all the vital safeguards before they move in. Hopefully, the advice we're providing will help anyone buying their first home to stay secure, before, during and after the move."

Anybody thinking of purchasing a new home can find out how much it would cost to insure by visiting www.insurance.co.uk and enjoy a 15% discount on home insurance purchased online.

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Notes to Editors:

¹Figures from The Office of National Statistics, British Crime Survey 2006

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