



ACCOMMODATION SECURITY

Shared houses can provide rich pickings for burglars, offering them the chance to pick up five laptops and five cameras, for example, in return for one break in. Houses with lots of tenants are often targeted for burglaries. There are some things you can do to make it less likely to happen to your house.

Look for a secure property

When you are house hunting keep security in mind. Things you should look for include:

/ Front doors (non PVC) should have a rim lock (Yale lock) PLUS a 5 lever mortice lock, usually known as a deadlock that operates with a traditional key.

/ Rear doors should have a deadlock plus good strong slide bolts top and bottom. / Locks on all accessible windows.

/ Letter box cowl, cage or covering, preventing anyone from getting access.

/ Unrestricted view of front door and windows from road i.e. no trees, bushes, etc. a burglar can hide behind. Be especially careful about basement flats.

If the property you are viewing doesn't fit these criteria ask the landlord or agent to consider doing the work. If they refuse then you should consider looking elsewhere.

Take precautions

Many of these are obvious but we still all forget or neglect to do them at some point or other. You and your housemates should keep reminding each other of the importance of these basic tips:

/ Never leave your accessible windows open even for a short time unless you are in the room. / Always use window locks and deadlocks.

/ Remove keys from locked windows and doors and keep them out of sight.

/ Use time switches – available from DIY shops – to turn on lights and radios, etc. when you're out or away.

/ Make friends with your neighbours, exchange phone numbers and let them know when you're away so they can keep an eye on things. You can do the same for them. You could even join the local Neighbourhood Watch.

/ Keep all valuables and alcohol out of sight.

/ Never hide spare keys outside e.g. under the doormat or in a flowerpot by the front door – this is where a thief will look.

/ If you live in a flat, never buzz open the door for strangers, hold the door open for someone who is leaving as you are arriving or let someone follow you in.

/ If you are going away, don't clean up too much, leave a few cups and plates about, make sure the place looks lived in.

/ Mark your property with the initials of your university (e.g. UoS – University of Salford) and your student ID number – this makes it harder for a burglar to sell stolen goods and can help the police to return items to you.

/ Always, always make a backup of your course work and keep it somewhere well hidden, laptops can be replaced, 6 months' research is far more difficult.

Responsibilities of the landlord

Section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 makes landlords responsible for keeping property in good repair if you have a tenancy there. If there's a security problem at the property, which is due to poor repairs, e.g. the windows are swollen and won't close or the back door is rotting away, then the landlord should take action to remedy this.

The other relevant legislation is The Housing Act 2004, which brought in a new system for local authorities to measure the health and safety risks in properties. This is based on a list of hazards, one of which is the risk of 'entry by intruders'.

If the local authority identifies that a property is at risk, it can ask the landlord to take action to remedy this. Examples of the type of issue that could be classed as hazardous are - no locks on external doors and rotten, flimsy or faulty doors or windows. If you have already had break-ins and are at risk of more then this could also be seen as a hazard.

If you feel that your property falls into this category you should contact Salford Housing Options Point (SHOP), at housing.advicecentre@salford.gov.uk, to assess the problem. If they deem it to be a hazard they will ask the landlord to take action to sort out the problem.

If you are concerned about the security of your accommodation

Unless the matter is urgent, put your concerns to your landlord, preferably in writing, making sure you keep copies of all correspondence.

If the matter is not dealt with satisfactorily or if it is urgent, please contact the accommodation office and we will be able to advise you on your options.

What to do if there is a break-in

Obviously the first step is to call the police – either on **999** if you feel it's an emergency or the constabulary number **101**.

They should come to visit you, take statements if necessary and arrange for fingerprinting to be done if appropriate. If it appears that there is weak security that needs to be dealt with urgently

and the police feel that the occupants are particularly vulnerable to another break in, they may be able to recommend what needs to be done to improve security.

Useful contacts

Greater Manchester Police: 101

www.gmp.police.uk

Crimestoppers: 0800 555 111 www.crimestoppers-uk.org

Salford City Council: 0161 7948888 www.salford.gov.uk

University of Salford Security Services

www.salford.ac.uk/estates/security

The contents of this fact sheet are for information only. You should consult [askUS](#) or an advice centre such as [CAB](#) before taking any action.

The University of Salford has a one stop shop for student support called askUS and has advisers available for all students, if you have any problems with your private rented accommodation please contact us.

askUS

a: University of Salford, University House, Salford, M5 4WT **t:** +44
(0)161 295 0023 (option 4, then option 2)

e: askus@salford.ac.uk



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