

## **Reduce your chances of becoming a burglary victim**

During 2007 -08 the number of burglaries in Bracknell Forest fell by nearly 8%. While this reduction is welcome it does follow 2 years of rises. The numbers can also be misleading in that while the number of offences is the number of houses burgled, the number of those affected by each burglary can be much higher. Every occupant and many neighbours can be affected by each burglary.

Common types of burglary include forcing the front or back door; this is often during the day time when occupants are out and it is easy for the burglar when the locks on the door are inadequate. During the summer months windows and doors are often left open in hot weather making the work of the thief even easier. If you're out of the house, even down the end of the garden, keep windows and doors securely closed.

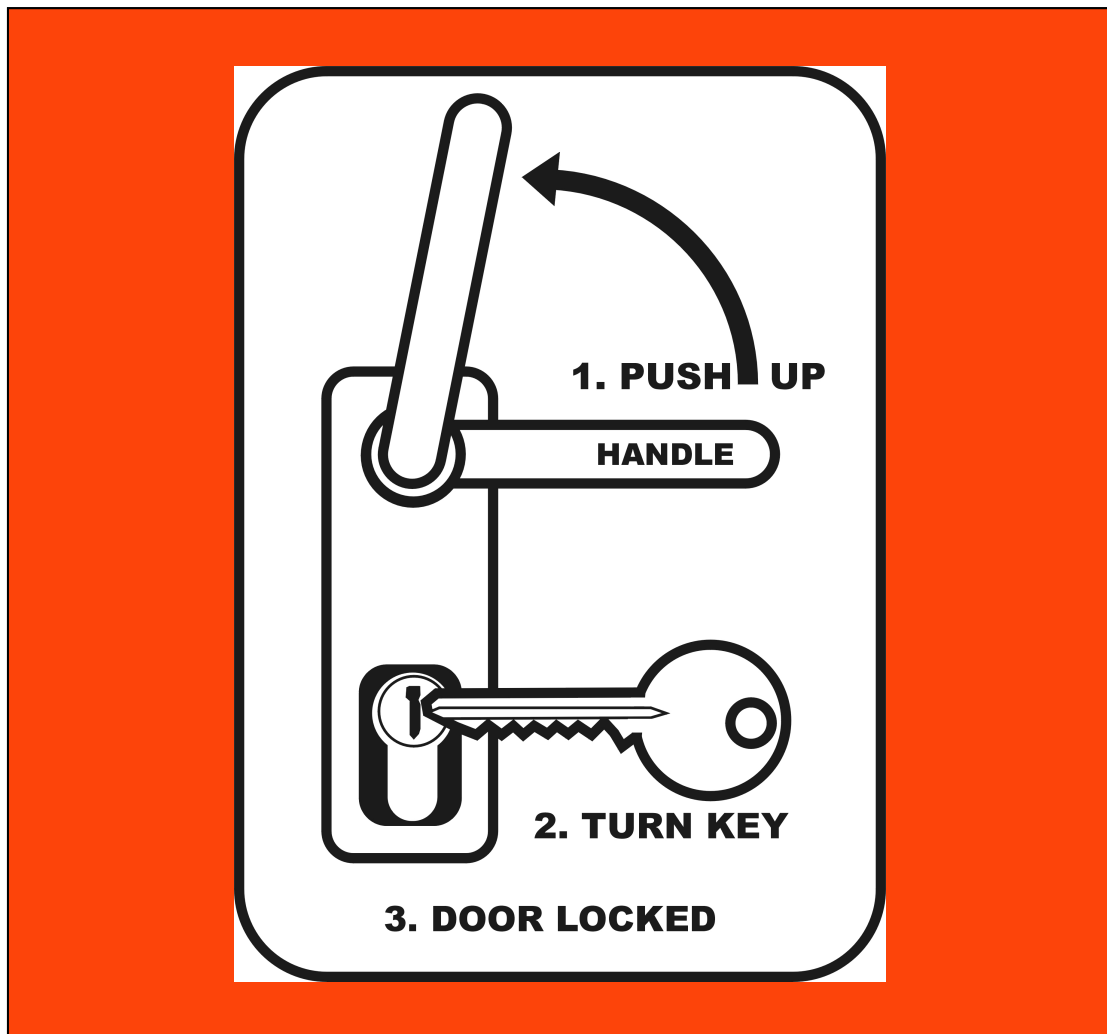
Another method of entry popular with burglars is to open doors by reaching through the letter box, sometimes with some sort of device and opening a door thought to be locked and secure by the occupant. This type of entry is popular at night time and is especially popular with thieves who wish to steal your car as modern cars can only be stolen with the keys. The fire service has agreed that it is safe to lock your door from the inside as long as the keys are accessible. Also try to leave car keys in a less obvious place than the usual hook on the kitchen wall. Don't make it easy for them.

Lastly, a less popular form of burglary but potentially devastating for the victim is the distraction burglary. These burglars prey on the elderly and the vulnerable so keep an eye out for elderly neighbours. If anyone calls at your home asking to come in, always check their identification and make sure you are happy with it. If in doubt, you can call all the main utility companies, Forest Care on 01344 786500 or Thames Valley Police on 0845 8 505 505. If you are really concerned, call 999. You should always never give anyone your PIN number. There is never a reason for anyone to ask you for this.

Joining a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme is still one of the best ways of reducing your chances of becoming a victim. Details of your nearest scheme are available from Margaret Weber at Bracknell Police Station on 01344 823488.

*Add illustration of UPVC door lock*

You can easily stop night time burglars by **DEADLOCKING** your doors. If your door works like the picture below, turning the key makes the door secure. Remove the keys to a safe place that the family know, in case of emergency



Contact Thames Valley Police on 0845 8 505 505 and ask for Crime Reduction for further advice.