

TOP TIPS

- Mark tools with a property marking kit
- Register tools for free at: www.immobilise.com
- Do not store tools in your van overnight

If you must keep tools in your vehicle:

- Lock doors and shut windows, physically checking they are secure
- Set your alarm/immobiliser and act if you hear the alarm sounding
- Park in a garage or secure area covered by CCTV
- Park with doors against a wall
- Consider upgrading locks/fitting additional protection



Trades people often carry thousands of pounds worth of tools in their vehicles, making them a target for theft, especially when vehicles are unattended on the street or in hotel car parks.

According to research conducted by insurance company Direct Line, tools are stolen from a tradespersons vehicle on average every 20 minutes across the UK.

The impact of these thefts results in loss of work and loss of earnings. It negatively affects the business reputation if work commitments cannot be fulfilled and the cost to replace tools can be financially damaging.



Upgrade Physical Security

Upgrading locks and alarm systems will provide your vehicle and tools with additional security. Installing a secondary alarm, which is not controlled by the central locking mechanism should be used, as they cannot be disarmed by thieves accessing the control panel on the van, or using a 'stolen' central locking signal.

If your dealer notifies you of vehicle security upgrades, ensure you install them. If you store tools in a shed or garage, make sure it is locked and alarmed. Installing Window Grilles, Blanks and Bulkheads prevents thieves from seeing what is inside your vehicle. A window Grille will prevent access if the window has been smashed.



Lock Doors & Shut Windows

Half of all thefts from vehicles are committed when vehicles are left unlocked.

Physically go round your vehicle before you leave checking each door is locked and each window is fully closed. If you know the locking system is faulty, get it repaired immediately.

If your door fails to lock when you operate the key fob, it is possible that someone is using a signal jammer and is blocking the signal. Do not leave the vehicle until you are certain it is secure.



Internal Security Solutions

Do not store tools in your vehicle overnight. Remove expensive items when not in use. If thieves find that vehicles do not contain valuable items, the incentive to break in diminishes.

If it is not possible to empty your vehicle, investing in an internal secure storage box with an integrated lock that is secured to your vehicle, will help keep tools and valuable items safe and hidden.

Thieves are attracted to items on show, even old coats and rucksacks will attract attention as the thief may believe they contain cash, phones or other valuables.

Wherever possible DO NOT leave any items on display.



External Security Solutions

Ladders are a target for thieves and are often stolen from the roof of vans. Investing in a set of lockable ladder clamps will secure the ladders making them less appealing to thieves.



Remove copper piping from storage tubes on your vehicle. Copper piping is regularly stolen from the roofs of vans. Remember to remove the piping before leaving your vehicle and to use a secure storage tube during transit where possible.

To increase the security of tools you can bolt either a cage or box to the base of your vehicle, which should be secured with a sturdy close shackle padlock.

Mark all tools with a property marking kit

Police often recover items believed to be stolen but are unable to prove their status or return them to their owner as there is no means of identifying them. Using an engraver, permanent marker, DNA kit or even gloss paint to add your company name or your own initials is a visual deterrent to theft. You may also wish to consider using forensic markers.



Mark items in several places and keep a record of where it is marked so that this can be passed onto second hand dealers and the police.

Register your tools for free at www.immobilise.com

Immobilise is a free property registering service to which the police have full access.



Second hand traders and members of the public can access the sister site Checkmend for a small fee to determine the status of an item prior to purchase.

Registering your tools on Immobilise makes it more difficult for thieves to sell the items on, assists you will get them back if recovered by police and provides you with an electronic inventory of the serial numbers, make and model of your tools.

Some manufacturers will allow you to register your tools with them and this again provides an electronic inventory.





Parking your vehicle

Parking your vehicle in a locked garage or compound adds a further layer of security.

Not only does this hide your vehicle from view but it can increase the risk of a thief being caught as it takes longer to gain access to the vehicle and there is the risk of an alarm sounding on the garage or compound, as well as the vehicle.



CCTV, street lighting and high footfall areas

CCTV can act as a deterrent to some criminals. It can also assist in the detection of crime, especially if used in conjunction with other security measures.

If you are parking at a hotel whilst working as a contractor, use car park/hotel premises approved under the Park Mark scheme, wherever possible. Where this is not possible park in areas covered by CCTV cameras. Consider having your own system installed at home or where you routinely park your vehicle.

If you are unable to park in an area covered by CCTV, park in a visible location where there are lots of people or where there is good street lighting. Thieves do not want to be seen whilst breaking in to vehicles.



Set your alarm / immobiliser and act if you hear it sounding

Double locking your vehicle should activate the immobiliser and alarm system. If you hear an alarm sounding, investigate the cause, without putting yourself at risk.

Thieves will sometimes activate an alarm to test the reaction and if there is none they may return to steal items.



Be aware when un-loading tools/materials from your van

Tool thefts often occur when vehicles are left insecure during loading or unloading of tools and materials. Whilst it may take a little longer, it is less inconvenient to secure the vehicle each time you leave it than return to find that items have been stolen. Don't let your guard down even when visiting builders merchants or stopping for lunch. Always lock up!

Always check your vehicle/tools before heading off to a work/site. Forensic opportunities will be lost if a vehicle is moved and the contents touched. Always check your vehicle before you leave and call police immediately if you suspect a break in has occurred and/or items have been stolen.



Always Report Crime to the Police

Always report crime to police. This allows police to capture the data and understand the full scale of the crime, which in turn informs their resources and tactics to tackle it.



When a crime is taking place, dial 999 in an emergency. You can also report to the Police on 101 or alternatively, you can report online at: www.police.uk

Police recommended security products can be found at: www.securedbydesign.com

Register your tools for free at: www.immobilise.com

For more information on vehicle security visit: www.builderstalkgroup.com/van-talk-group

or email info@builderstalkgroup.com

