

# PROTECTING YOUR ART AND ANTIQUES



## Advice from Nottinghamshire Police's Pre Crime Unit



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## Introduction

Nottinghamshire Police recognises the high value that art and antiques hold in monetary value and sentimental value for their owner.

This guide explains how you can protect your precious art and antiques from being targeted by criminals.

**Keeping detailed documentation can be crucial in helping return art and antiques to their owner if they are stolen.**

**These tips show how you can go about keeping a detailed inventory of your valuables.**

### **Take photographs of your valuables**

Having photographs of your valuable items can greatly increase the chances of them being returned to you if they are stolen.

Take a few photographs of each item, including the aspects of it that make it uniquely identifiable.

It can be useful if you can include the following in your photographs:

- Any distinguishing marks and hallmarks
- The object's size and dimensions, by placing a ruler next to it
- Show the front and back of the item, particularly paintings
- Try to use a plain background
- Take the photograph in natural light rather than using the flash facility.



### **Write a description of your valuables**

It is far easier to write a description of your valuable item when you are looking at it, rather than trying to remember it in the event of it being stolen.

When describing an object of value, the 'Object ID' format is recognised throughout the art world and usually includes some of the following details:

- Type of object - for example, painting or clock
- Materials - for example, wood, ceramic or glass
- Measurements - size and weight
- Marking - hallmarks, signatures, any damage or marks
- Title - name of the painting or object
- Maker - creator or company
- Subject - what the object represents
- Date or period of the object - for example, art deco.

It is also useful to include any extra information that could help identify the object, for example, its colour or shape.

Once you have taken photographs and written descriptions of your art and antiques, make sure you keep them in a safe place.

It is important that they are **not** kept with your art and antiques.

# Protecting your art and antiques

## Immobilise

The national property database Immobilise enables police to reunite stolen items with their rightful owners.

When police recover suspected stolen items, they check them against those registered on the database to see if they can locate the owner.

You can register almost any kind of item on the database for **free**.

Once you have registered your valuables, such as televisions, cameras, iPods, bicycles and tools, you can display stickers on your window at home to warn potential thieves that any property they might steal is registered with Immobilise and can be traced back to you.

To register your property on the Immobilise database, visit [www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com)



**When using any type of property marking system, it is important to display signs at your home to show that asset marking is in place and deter criminals from targeting your property.**

**Contact Nottinghamshire Police's Pre Crime Unit for more information and advice on all of these security options.**

## Property marking

Property marking (also known as asset marking) is becoming an increasingly popular crime prevention technique and deterrent to criminals. It is cost effective and doesn't take long to carry out.

The idea is that if a criminal sees your property is marked, they would be less likely to steal it as the item is more difficult to sell or pass on, making it less desirable.

A thief is less likely to steal well marked property or break into premises where property is marked because:

- It increases their chances of being caught
- It makes the property more difficult to sell
- It will significantly reduce the price the item will obtain.

## Visible property marking

Items can be visibly marked using stencilling kits to display your name and postcode. SelectaMark is an example of a visible asset marking product.

It is permanent as the indelible compound slightly melts on to the surface of the item, leaving the text secure. Offenders could try to file off the stencilling, but this would leave a mark and look suspicious when trying to sell your item on.

## Invisible property marking

Invisible marking systems use a forensically coded solution to mark items. These systems include SmartWater and SelectaDNA.

If an item is stolen and later recovered by police, it is examined using an ultraviolet light, which highlights the presence of the solution on the item.

Each batch of solution has its own unique code, registered to the buyer. This means items marked with your solution can be proven to be yours and returned to you. If you use this type of property marking system, it is vital you register your kit, or police will not be able to reunite you with your items if they are stolen and later recovered.

Ultraviolet marker pens can also be used. They can be bought from most supermarkets and stationery shops. You can use the pen to write your name and postcode on valuable assets without detracting from their value and appearance.

Always seek advice from an expert before marking your antiques or artwork.

## Don't get caught out buying stolen goods

- Be suspicious of buying items when the asking price doesn't reflect its market value. Remember, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!
- Make sure you check the details of the seller and record these for future reference.
- When buying artwork, always check the work against stolen art records.
- If in doubt, don't buy without doing further research or seeking advice.

If you have reason to believe an item you have been offered for sale is stolen, contact the police on **101**.

If you have had property stolen and see it for sale elsewhere, don't confront the seller without contacting the police for advice first.

## Nottinghamshire Alert

Nottinghamshire Alert is a system which allows Nottinghamshire Police, Neighbourhood Watch in Nottinghamshire and other organisations that work for the public to send community safety messages to you quickly and efficiently.

If you are interested in getting updates on major incidents, advice on crime prevention and community safety and alerts about criminals operating in your area, make sure you are registered with the system.

You can report antisocial behaviour in your area and receive responses from police about the incident you have reported and find out how to join a Neighbourhood Watch scheme or set up your own in your street by registering.

### What do I get?

- A totally free service — you can control your message settings and choose to receive alerts via email, text message to your mobile phone or recorded voicemail. You can unsubscribe at any time.
- Information about crime trends, incidents and appeals from authorised police officers and police staff.
- Report suspicious and antisocial behaviour (not crime), receive updates and responses about them.
- Start, manage or request to join a Neighbourhood Watch scheme in your area.
- Configure how, when and which messages you'd like to receive.

If you want to know more about Nottinghamshire Alert, contact Nottinghamshire Police's Pre Crime Unit.

**Tel:** 101, extension 800 3011

**Email:** [nottinghamshirealert@nottinghamshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:nottinghamshirealert@nottinghamshire.pnn.police.uk)

To register for Nottinghamshire Alert, visit [www.nottinghamshirealert.co.uk](http://www.nottinghamshirealert.co.uk)

If you would like a paper copy of the registration form, call **101** or visit your local police station to request one.

For more advice on crime prevention contact

Nottinghamshire Police's Pre Crime Unit  
Arrow Centre  
Hucknall  
Nottinghamshire  
NG15 8AY

Tel: **101**

Tell us what priorities you want your local police to focus on with our online survey

[www.neighbourhoodprioritysurvey.co.uk](http://www.neighbourhoodprioritysurvey.co.uk)

If you have information about criminals operating in your area, call Crimestoppers anonymously on

**0800 555 111**