

# SECURING YOUR COMMERCIAL VEHICLE



## Advice from Nottinghamshire Police's Pre Crime Unit



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## Introduction

**Commercial vehicles or the goods, tools and equipment stored in them, can be a target for criminals. If these were to be stolen, it could be very costly to you or your company.**

**This guide aims to help you be more aware of the crimes that can affect these types of vehicles and support you in making the right security choices.**

## Commercial vehicle security

### Doors and locks

Lock all doors and close all windows every time your vehicle is unattended - however briefly. You should also have a fuel cap which locks.

Make access to your vehicle difficult and time consuming by installing extra locks.

The range of security measures for commercial vehicles is wide and varied. Thatcham approved supplementary products available on the market are:

- **Deadlock** - a mechanical device fitted to a door. It operates by throwing a bolt into a receiver fitted to the opposing body section when operated by an external key. To further secure the deadlock install **deadlock reinforcement plates**. These are plates that go behind the existing deadlock to enhance the security of the lock.
- **Slamlock** - a device that automatically locks the vehicle door without requiring any operation by the driver.

Other available products are:

- **Diablock** - an electromagnetic van deadlock which provides security and convenience electronically without cosmetically affecting the appearance of the vehicle.
- **Lock defending security plates** - designed to shield the existing locks and where applicable, handles, preventing screwdriver attacks. Make sure the plates are case hardened and drill-proof.
- **Hasp and staple lock** - this can be installed on most commercial vehicles.
- **Alarmed lock** - designed to alert you to the lock being tampered with. Remember the movement and shock sensor could be activated by other means, for example movement when driving.

### Windows

#### Security glazing

Also known as impact-resistant glazing or Enhanced Protection Glazing (EPG).

This holds shattered glass in place. The increased time to break-in and noise can deter thieves. However, fitting the safety and security film must be done professionally and can be expensive.

#### Window grills or window blanks

These can be a visual deterrent against theft from vans.

#### Install an alarm

This can help keep your vehicle secure but it must be installed professionally to be effective.

Don't advertise the type of alarm you have, as a thief might know how to disable it.

#### Key management

When you leave your vehicle, always remove the ignition key and lock all doors - it only takes a few seconds for a thief to jump into your vehicle and drive away. Follow this routine every time, even when filling up with fuel or popping to the shop.

On an icy morning, never leave your vehicle unattended with the engine running to warm it up or defrost the windows.

At home, always keep your vehicle keys in a safe place, out of sight and away from windows and doors.



### Catalytic converters

Catalytic converters control and convert exhaust emissions from your vehicle into less toxic substances. If yours is stolen, you will know because your vehicle's engine will sound different.

Use a catalytic converter protection device or marking system. These websites provide details of products that could help protect your vehicle.

Approved by the Association of Chief Police Officers' Secured By Design scheme

[www.securedbydesign.com](http://www.securedbydesign.com)

- Approved Thatcham alarm installers  
[www.thatcham.org](http://www.thatcham.org)
- Catalytic converter marking system  
[www.retainagroup.com](http://www.retainagroup.com)
- Products to enhance vehicle security  
[www.soldsecure.com](http://www.soldsecure.com)

### Tracking stolen vehicles

A vehicle tracking system combines the installation of an electronic device in a vehicle, or fleet of vehicles, with computer software to enable the owner or a third party to track the vehicle's location. Vehicle information can be viewed on electronic maps on the internet or special software.

Some vehicle tracking systems integrate several security systems, for example by sending an automatic alert to a phone or email if an alarm is triggered or the vehicle is moved without authorisation, or when it leaves or enters a geofence.

**Tracking systems can be expensive, so it's important to choose the correct one. Always rely on Thatcham approved systems.**

### Fit an immobiliser

Electronic immobilisers are designed to prevent the vehicle from starting. They must be fitted by Thatcham accredited dealers or installers.

Mechanical immobilisers prove to be more difficult to bypass and offer protection from most commercial vehicle theft methods. The most popular mechanical immobiliser is a steering wheel lock.

Other options include a **pedal box**. Once the pedal box is fitted and locked in place it encases all of the pedals, making it nearly impossible to access them. It is also extremely difficult to attack due to the restricted access in the vehicle foot well.

### Install an On Board Diagnostic (OBD) or Engine Control Unit (ECU) protection device

Thieves have discovered a new way to steal your commercial vehicle by overriding the manufacturer's immobilisation system by connecting a laptop into the OBD socket and programming a new key into the ECU.

An OBD/ECU protection device protects the socket in a secure box which is attached to the anti-roll bar behind the dashboard and can only be unlocked with the correct code/key.



### Number plates

If the number plates are stolen from your vehicle you should report it straight away. You might start receiving parking fines, speeding fines or worse, as number plates can be used to disguise the identity of vehicles used in a wide range of crimes. Number plate manufacturers, DVLA and others have developed a voluntary standard for theft resistant number plates. Plates that meet the standard will resist known attack methods for a minimum of three minutes and can be expected to cost around twice the price of normal plates. Visit [www.soldsecure.com](http://www.soldsecure.com) for more information.

Alternatively, consider fitting the number plate with security screws. Go online to find the correct security screw for your vehicle and check with the manufacturer or dealership to ensure you're not invalidating any vehicle warranties before using them.

### Wheels

Fit your wheels with lockable wheel nuts. Protect the spare wheel from being stolen by fitting a spare wheel guard. The guard is designed to ensure the spare wheel can only be released from inside the vehicle.

### Delivery drivers

Thieves target commercial vehicles when drivers are making deliveries, picking up cargo, or making a service or sales call to a business. It takes less than 60 seconds for a thief to reach in, take your valuables and go.

- Turn off the engine and lock doors when leaving vehicles. Lock all doors and close all windows.
- Don't rely entirely on the remote locking system as the signal can be jammed. If you use a remote key, always double check the door is locked.
- Don't leave your personal property on view. Hide or disguise contents if it's impossible to remove them.
- Avoid talking about loads or routes with other drivers or customers. Be careful about mentioning how good business has been.
- Never pick up passengers.
- Protect documents such as shipping orders and consignment notes. If these are stolen, criminals can use them to pick up valuable loads.
- Consider installing an in-vehicle surveillance camera to help catch thieves in the event of a break in.
- Be alert for suspicious people loitering around your delivery areas.
- Be alert to vehicles following you while you're on your route. Write down a description of the vehicle and license number as well as the occupants.
- Don't carry more money than absolutely necessary.
- Keep the vehicle keys separate from the rest of your keys, which may allow access to businesses or homes.
- Keep a mobile phone with you at all times and call 999 if you feel threatened. Only use your mobile when it's safe to do so.
- Don't park in isolated areas to do paperwork or for a meal break.

### Parking your commercial vehicle

When you park your van at home try and use a garage if you have access to one. Always lock your vehicle and garage.

If you park on a driveway, low cost security lights could deter thieves. If the design of your driveway allows, consider installing a driveway alert.

A driveway alert is a Passive Infrared (PIR) operated portable audible alert device that senses both vehicles and pedestrians. The device is featured in place, and the portable alerting device can be taken up to 400 feet away to alert you when there is movement.

### When you park your vehicle away from home, always try to avoid places that:

- Are unattended
- Have easy access
- Are concealed from public view
- Have many escape routes.

Look for a public car park which is part of the police-approved 'Park Mark' scheme.

This aims to make car parks safer and more attractive places by setting high standards for design and management.



## Securing the contents of your commercial vehicle

### Storage

Vans used for work can have a range of technical goods, tools and equipment inside. These items are often valuable and easily sold on by criminals. To avoid property being stolen from your van, ensure all valuable items such as tools are removed overnight.

You can also consider alternative storage security measures:

- **Van tool storage boxes** - keep expensive equipment in a storage box that is fixed to the floor of the van.
- **Use notices** - which say that no valuable items are stored in the van overnight.

### Property marking and registers

Have your vehicle's registration number etched onto all glass surfaces - including the headlamps. Or you could have the last seven digits of the **Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)**, or some other unique identifying number linked to a recognised database, etched in this way.

Mark all your valuables with a visible marking system, such as **Selectamark** - a permanent, indelible, stencil kit. The indelible compound works on plastic, paint or powder-coated surfaces.

Another visible option to consider is a product called **Cremark** - a permanent marker pen and curing lacquer. Although **Cremark** is not an endorsed product, visible marking of property is strongly supported.

If any of your valuables have serial numbers, keep a note of them in a safe place or register them at [www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com). This can help us return your possessions if they're stolen and recovered.



### Electrical equipment

Take all your belongings with you when you leave your vehicle, if you are unable to do this do not leave your items on display.

#### Stereo

Always remove your vehicle stereo if you can. All vehicle equipment - whether you can remove it or not - should be permanently marked, in a visible place, with the vehicle's registration number. Make a note of the stereo's serial number and keep it in a safe place or register at [www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com).

#### Satellite navigation mats

These allow you to use your sat nav without leaving the suction marks on the windscreen.



### Bulkhead

This provides a visual barrier between the vehicle and the load area, keeping tools, stock or equipment hidden out of sight.

The punched bulkhead offers a limited view into the load area, which allows for the rear view mirror to be used without compromising security.

Bulkheads with a small window located in line with the rear view mirror still provide good visual deterrence without restricting the driver's ability to see when reversing.

## Securing your fleet of commercial vehicles

You should take on drivers who are honest and reliable. It's worth putting some effort into finding the right employees. For agency drivers, use reputable agencies that supply criminal records-checked drivers. Some belong to trade organisations like the Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC).

- Check references and previous five to 10 year history before you take on a driver.
- Speak to previous employers. Don't rely on phone numbers given by the driver.
- Check the applicant's licence is valid and check for endorsements before you employ someone, and then at six-monthly intervals afterwards. Drivers should tell you of any changes to their licence as they take place.
- Check if the applicant has any prosecutions pending or is waiting for sentencing
- For agency drivers, ensure the agency has carried out all the checks.

### Driver training

- Give drivers training in security measures for their vehicle and the company's premises.
- Security should be a daily routine in your workplace. Training drivers in the right habits will make security a normal part of their work.
- Check drivers understand and use the security equipment fitted to their vehicle. The same goes for security equipment on your premises.
- All employees and companies should know their responsibilities.

### Company policy

- Build security duties and responsibilities into your company's contract of employment. Contracts should make clear that drivers will face disciplinary proceedings or dismissal if they fail to carry out these duties.
- Include your company's security instructions in the driver's introduction to the company and driver's handbook.
- Use photo identification cards for drivers and keep signed photos of all drivers for your personnel records.
- Never disclose information to callers over the phone without verifying who they are.

### Instruct drivers to always:

- Lock and secure their vehicle whenever they leave it.
- Keep their keys on them when they're away from their vehicle.
- Refuel on site before beginning their journey, where possible.
- Watch out for incorrect or short loading by careless or dishonest warehouse staff, even those not directly involved with loading.
- Report any irregularity in loading, locking or sealing, or in documents.
- Check their vehicle is correctly loaded.
- Avoid routine stops for cigarettes, newspapers etc.
- Verify with the transport manager any instructions to change a delivery address.
- Keep quiet about the nature of their loads or journeys.
- Encourage drivers to report anything unusual or suspicious to you or us. Encourage them to phone Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 to report criminal activity anonymously.

# Securing your fleet of business vehicles

## Secure working practices

- Security must become part of every employee's daily working practice, whoever they are. Managers should consider every possible risk and bear security measures in mind.
- Restrict knowledge about loads to only those who need to know.
- The pre-loading of vehicles, normally for early morning departures, should be kept to an absolute minimum. When pre-loading is necessary, the vehicle should always be kept in secure premises.
- If the driver keeps the keys to their vehicle when they're not at work, advise them to:
  - Keep them secure at all times.
  - Never leave them where they could be copied.
  - Make sure there is no way of identifying the keys or the vehicle from the key ring.
- If the driver's vehicle keys are kept at the operating centre:
  - Keep them in a secure and lockable place, out of sight of strangers.
  - Never use a 'hiding place', for example inside the front bumper, or a peg system that identifies the vehicle.
- Make sure all drivers have access to some form of mobile communication device.
- Instruct your drivers to use pre-planned overnight parking facilities, particularly those that are members of the police 'Safer Parking Scheme'. These display the 'Park Mark' award sign.
- Keep in regular contact with drivers to identify/confirm routes, stops and estimated times of arrival.
- Don't allow drivers to give lifts, or to have any unauthorised people in the vehicle.
- Keep accurate vehicle records, for example all numbers of major parts, and special equipment fitted. This will help identify the vehicle if it's stolen.
- Keep in regular touch with your local police - with either the Crime Reduction Manager, crime desk or Local Intelligence Officer.
- All staff should be made aware of the seriousness of the problem of commercial vehicle theft and the resulting disruption and financial loss to the company, which could lead to job losses.

## Securing your business premises

When you are planning your premises' security, consider:

- Perimeter protection (fences).
- Site access and its control (gates).
- Surveillance (lighting and effective CCTV).
- Guards.
- Intruder detection.
- Visitor control.
- Limiting the number of keyholders.
- Remote staff vehicle parking.
- Vehicle key storage.
- Controlled access to loading bays and control systems.
- Personnel and vehicle search procedures.
- Always make sure any tools or equipment that could help criminals steal trucks or loads are securely locked away when not in use.

## Nottinghamshire Business Watch

The Nottinghamshire Safer Business Initiative aims to make Nottinghamshire one of the most prosperous, crime-free counties in the country by working with businesses to help reduce crime.

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

You can report suspicious behaviour, find out how to join a Business Watch scheme or set up your own 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.
- Start, manage or request to join a Business Watch scheme in your area.
- Configure how, when and which messages you'd like to receive.

If you want to know more about Nottinghamshire Business Watch 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 Business Watch, visit [www.nottsbusinesswatch.co.uk](http://www.nottsbusinesswatch.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**