

SECURITY FOR PLACES OF WORSHIP



FIRST PRINCIPLE

norfolk.police.uk/firstprinciple
suffolk.police.uk/firstprinciple

Key points

- If you have lead on the roof, install a monitored roof alarm and/or CCTV.
- Lock the building at night.
- Lock all gates at night.
- Remove any items that could be used to climb onto the roof.
- Conduct regular checks of the building, including the roof.
- Use forensic markers to mark valuable items, including lead.
- Store valuable items securely when not in use.
- Maintain an inventory, including photographs, of valuable items.
- Ask the local community to report any suspicious activity.
- Empty collection boxes daily.

PREVENT CRIME

PROTECT COMMUNITIES



NORFOLK
CONSTABULARY
Our Priority is You



SUFFOLK
CONSTABULARY



Achieving a balance between offering a welcoming environment and protecting the valuable assets within places of worship can be a challenge. Any crime at a place of worship can have high emotional as well as physical cost.

Take the opportunity to regularly review security at your place of worship.

If you have lead on the roof, install a monitored roof alarm/CCTV

Lead roof coverings or even guttering and downpipes are often the main targets for thieves.

A monitored roof alarm and/or CCTV substantially reduces the time available for a crime to be committed.

Police and local community key holders can be alerted and respond immediately.

Always use a company that is registered with either National Security Inspectorate (NSI) [NSI - Certification for security and fire protection companies \(www.nsi.org.uk\)](http://www.nsi.org.uk) or Security Systems and Alarms Inspection Board (SSAIB) [Looking for a Service Provider \(ssaib.org\)](http://ssaib.org) to supply and fit the products.

Employing a company is usually the most effective means of monitoring the alarm.

Alternately a dedicated Smartphone connected to the system can be shared between members of the community on a rota basis to provide cover.



Another option to reduce the risk of theft/damage of lead from the roof is to replace it with an approved substitute. Historic England will support the use of alternatives where evidence of a risk of theft exists. [HEAG 305 Theft of Metal from Church Roofs: Replacement Materials \(historicengland.org.uk\)](http://historicengland.org.uk) If you do install a lead replacement, use signage to deter future attempts.

For more detailed advice please go to [HEAG306 Theft of Metal from Church Roofs: Prevention and Response \(historicengland.org.uk\)](http://historicengland.org.uk)

For details of police preferred specification products please see [Secured by Design \(select roofing\)](#)

Lock the building at night



The opening hours of any place of worship will always need to be a balance of local factors including the availability of staff or volunteers to be present and the proximity of both local crime hotspots and police resources.

It is however always recommended that buildings are kept secure at night.

Lock all gates at night

Creating a secure perimeter around the building will deter unauthorised access. This is especially important when protecting against lead theft, as vehicles are often required to transport the material.

Even a vehicle barrier can be enough to deter lead theft.

Ideally the entire perimeter (or even a smaller inner perimeter close to the building) will be secure. It is recommended that the perimeter is at least 1.8m high and constructed of a material such as railings or welded mesh to allow natural surveillance. Gates should be of the same height and capable of being locked from both sides.



Metal gates can be a target for theft themselves, especially in isolated rural areas. Measures should be taken to prevent the gates being lifted off the hinges. Hanging one hinge upside down and/or chaining the gate to the post can prevent gates being lifted off and stolen.

Remove any items that could be used to climb onto the roof

Check for ladders, oil tanks, outbuildings and even moveable objects like benches that could be used to climb onto the roof.



Also remove tools or other objects like bricks that could be used to force entry or cause damage.

Conduct regular checks of the building, including the roof

If lead has been removed from the roof, rain can quickly cause substantial damage to the building, costing far in excess than just replacing the lead. Regular checks will not only ensure that you identify and deal with damage at the earliest opportunity but also allows

you to check for any signs, including holes in the fencing, damage to the ground where ladders have been placed or hidden tools, that someone may be planning to return to the site. Regular checking also sends a message that the building is well maintained and therefore

the risk of being caught is increased.

Use forensic markers to identify valuable items, including lead



Forensic marking involves using a clear liquid solution to mark valuable items, including lead on the roof, with a unique code. Once dry, the liquid becomes invisible without the use of a UV light.

Larger items, including lead should be marked in multiple locations.

Signage that forensic markers are in use should be displayed to act as a deterrent.

For more information see [Secured by Design](#) and select the Forensic marking (www.securedbydesign.com – chose Member Companies, Property & Asset Registration, Advanced search for Products and Forensic marking.)

Store valuable items securely when not in use

Small valuable items should be stored in a safe secured to the ground and within a locked room when not in use.

Larger items including altar ware in churches can be replaced with wooden or base metal substitutes when not in use.



Consider storing the most valuable items in secure storage (at a bank for example) off site.

Consideration should be given to discreetly chaining antique furniture and other valuables to floors or walls.

Wall hangings and paintings should be secured to the walls, ideally using non-return security screws. This may not deter the determined thief but may be sufficient to prevent the opportunist criminal.

Maintain an inventory, including photographs, of valuable items

The inventory should be stored in a safe place away from the building. All photographs should have a ruler or coin in the picture to indicate size.



Also keep a note of any serial numbers, and the location of any forensic markers used.

Register the items at www.immobilise.com

Ask the local community to report any suspicious activity



Those who attend the place of worship or live or work close by should be encouraged to look out for and report all suspicious or unusual activity to police immediately. Let your neighbours know if there is planned maintenance and if appropriate

put up signage asking for the police to be called if there is activity on the site outside specified hours.

Also ask the community to watch out for unauthorised access onto scaffolding. If the community know

they will be advised when there are authorised workers on site, they are more likely to identify suspicious behaviour at other times.

Lead theft occurs at night as well as during the day.

Neighbours may hear vehicles but not see any lights. Offenders will often use wheelie bins to transport lead and this is another indication of suspicious activity. Offenders may also use inclement weather such as high wind or storms to disguise their activity.

Empty collection boxes daily

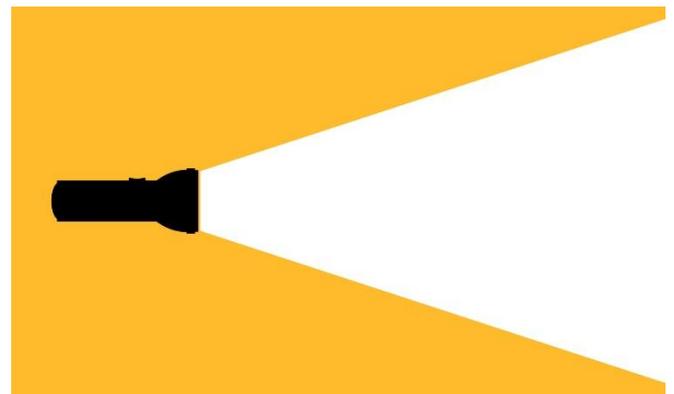
Do this when the building is closed. Have two people present for personal safety.

Secure collection boxes to a solid surface.

Store the money off site if possible.

Other points to consider

Lighting – if the building has good natural surveillance or CCTV, effective dusk to dawn lighting is essential. However, in an isolated (rural) area with CCTV, lighting may actually facilitate criminal activity. If you do decide not to light the building, make sure you let your community know to bring torches if they attend to check the building.



Doors – as a minimum, all external doors (and any leading into office areas where valuables may be stored) should be

Robust, fitted with at least one 5 lever mortice lock to BS3621

and hinge bolts. Do not forget to

secure doors into cellars and other underground areas.

Windows – if possible these should be locked with a key operated lock.

[Unbreakable windows and glass Hammerglass](#)

Stained glass windows may be protected by mesh screening or Hammerglass www.hammerglass.com

Keys – keys for the building and any safes or equipment on site should be stored securely, away from the building and not identifiable.

Regular audits should be conducted to ensure that all sets of keys can be accounted for.

Self-Assessment

Please complete the following self-assessment questions to check the security of your building.

Church & Places of Worship Security Self-Assessment

		Y/N	Action required
Has any one person been designated to be responsible for security?	Consider making this a role for one of the team.		
Are fences, hedges and gates in a good state of repair?	Ensure that the perimeter is secure, ideally at least 1.8m high. Where possible restrict vehicle access to the property.		
Are all external doors fitted with good quality robust locks?	Where practical and possible 5 lever mortice locks should be fitted to British Standard BS3621 or BS 8621. Locks should be fitted by a specialist locksmith. www.locksmiths.co.uk/		
Are opening windows fitted with locks?	Window design varies considerably and specialist advice may be required from a locksmith.		
Does your property require being lit at night? If so, is it adequate?	If there is surveillance from neighbours and/or CCTV, Dusk to Dawn Lighting is usually recommended.		
Is CCTV used for vulnerable areas, including the roof?	Consider installing monitored CCTV to provide additional formal surveillance to any vulnerable areas, especially the roof. Lighting must be appropriate for the CCTV system.		
Are all key holders recorded?	Do not leave any keys on the premises. Display details of persons to contact in an emergency.		
Do you have an up to date inventory and	It is essential to record details of all items. Photographs assist with		

photographs of all contents?	identification following a theft. Keep them safe, away from the property and up to date.		
Is your collection box emptied daily?	A notice should be displayed to indicate this.		
Are stained glass windows protected?	Vulnerable stained-glass windows can be protected externally by black powder coated stainless steel window guards or Hammerglass.		
Access			
Are any parts of your building left open when unattended and at night?	Discuss the need for this with your staff and community. Would it be practical to have a key safe? Consider a mobile phone contact to allow access outside opening times.		
Are there adequate signs?	Signs will set rules, inform people of opening times or how to request entry outside opening times.		
Have you considered a Watch Scheme? Are you registered with a Heritage Watch scheme?	The local community can be your eyes and ears. Encourage them to report anything suspicious to the police.		
Valuable Items			
Do you lock small valuable items in a secure place when not in use?	Use a safe secured to a solid surface. Seek advice from your insurance company as to the standard of safe required. Keep the safe in a locked room.		
Are your small valuable items property marked?	Overt marking is preferred as it is visible, however covert marking with a forensic marking solution can be used for valuables.		

Are valuable items identified and registered on the National database "Immobilise"?	Register valuable items at www.immobilise.com a national property database the police can search facility. This is a free service. Once registered, items can be reunited with the owner if found and it may assist with a prosecution.		
Artefacts			
Do you display original Artefacts?	Display wooden or base metal substitutes wherever possible. Originals can always be reinstated when required.		
Antique Furniture			
Do you have antique furniture?	Consider discretely securing valuable furniture to the wall or floor to deter the opportunist thief and delay a determined criminal.		
Outbuildings			
Do you have outbuildings?	Each building needs to be assessed individually and the level of security will depend on the contents. Please refer to shedandgaragesecurity1.pdf (suffolk.police.uk) for more details.		
Metal Theft			
Does your property have lead or other metal roofing materials?	This is perhaps the most vulnerable area and desirable to thieves due to its high value.		
Is access to the roof easy and or secluded? Pay particular attention to porches as they are particularly vulnerable.	Lock ladders away and secure items such as benches and bins away from the building.		
Has all metal been marked with DNA liquid?	Consider marking all metal with DNA liquid. Mark large areas of lead		

	roofing.		
Are roof alarms installed?	There are many types of roof alarms available and advice can be obtained from NSI or SSAIB accredited installers.		

Actions identified	Responsible person	Date completed

First Principle: Related links

Check out all of our Crime Prevention information using the following links or by using the QR code to take you to the First Principle Pages Alternatively go to our website at <https://www.suffolk.police.uk/> and look in the 1st Principle A-Z of Crime Prevention.

Allotment Security
Anti-Social Behaviour
ATM Security
Beach Hut Security
Boat Security
Building Site Security
Business Security
Caravan Security
Caravan Storage
Card Security
Catalytic Converters
Church Security
Cold Callers
Commercial CCTV
Counterfeit Banknotes
County Lines Advice
for Landlords
Cyber Crime
Cycle Security
Dangerous Dogs
Dog Fouling
Dog Theft
Domestic CCTV
Domestic Violence
Farm Security
Fraud Prevention
Grooming
Hate Crime

Heating Oil
Home Improvements
Home Security
Home Security for
Tenants
Horses and Stables
Keyless Vehicles
Key Safe Security
Lock Snapping
Mopeds and Scooters
Motorcycle Security
Neighbour Disputes
Occupiers Liability
Personal Security
Power Tool Security
Products Brochure
Rural Crime
Security Alarms
Sheds and Garages
Social Media
Social Media for
Parents
Suspicious Behaviour
Shoplifting
Taxi Driver Safety
Vehicle Security
Windows and Doors



Other Links you might find helpful

Ask the Police
Secured by Design
Sold Secure

Crimestoppers
0800 555 111

Victim Care
0300 303 3705