

Caravan Security

Fact one Caravan thefts are increasing.

Fact two Parking at home in your driveway or garden is no guarantee against theft. You still need to fit security devices.

Fact three There are many ways to protect caravans.

Security steps - caravans

Hitch locks

Provide a reasonable degree of protection from an opportunist thief. Get one manufactured from heavy steel to cover the tow socket fixing bolts - make sure it has a good lock.

Wheel clamps

A good deterrent when the caravan is stored in a compound or at home. Some are better than others. Certain designs are vulnerable to hacksaw attack or unbolting of the wheel with the clamp still in place.

Wheel stands

Wheel stands can be a good deterrent but make sure they are locked in place. The chassis manufacturer may recommend the use of axle stands for winter storage.

Security posts

Useful if you keep a caravan at home. Security posts cemented into the drive can allow a caravan to be hitched to them and secured with a hitch lock. Other posts are retractable allowing the caravan to be blocked in the drive once the post is lifted and locked.

Other steps

- Photograph your caravan, especially any distinctive features.
- Etch the caravan chassis number or postcode on all windows - use an ultra-violet marker pen on items/fittings inside.
- Roof marking with your postcode can assist the police, especially with the increase in police aircraft and helicopters. Commercial kits are available or you can do it yourself.
- The fitting of a reliable alarm alongside other security devices can deter thieves. Make sure it is reliable and properly fitted.
- Keep a record of the caravan chassis number. If the caravan has been CRIS registered (Caravan Registration Identification Scheme) keep the documents safe and away from the caravan.
- Ensure safe storage of a caravan. Don't choose on price alone.
- Some sites have high security compounds, 24-hour guards and sophisticated alarm systems. Remove all personal belongings and contents.

Buying a caravan

- Don't buy in public houses, car parks or motorway service stations. Always try and visit the seller's home address.
- If the seller's house displays a 'For sale' sign, check to see who lives there. Sellers have been known to use the drive of an empty house.
- Check the number plate. Is it the same as the tow car? Is it a temporary or hand-written number plate?
- If a telephone number is given and you are advised to ring between certain times, make sure you are not ringing a 'phone box. Dial 100 and ask the Operator to check.
- Check the caravan chassis number. Has it been altered or removed? If in doubt contact the local police.
- Caravans manufactured since 1992 should have a 17-digit number stamped into the A-Frame and etched into at least three of the windows. The owners should also have a formal registration document.
- You can check with the Hire Purchase Information (HPI) and ask for a CRIS (Caravan Registration and Identification Scheme) check. You will need to give a 17-digit number and the name and address of the owner. HPI will confirm:
 - - the owner details;
 - - if the caravan is listed as stolen;
 - - if there is a finance deal outstanding.

There is a small charge for this service.

If in doubt, walk away and contact your local police.

If you are selling a caravan

Never part with a caravan until the cheque has been cleared. Cheques can be forgeries, or stolen. This includes building society cheques and bank drafts.