



- **STRANGERS AT THE DOOR – BOGUS CALLERS – DESTRUCTION BURGLARIES**

- **This is continuing to be a problem – please take the time to read this, pass it on, talk to neighbours and relatives.**

- If you are at all worried, ring the police. Don't let the caller stop you doing these things by saying he or she is in a hurry. A genuine caller won't mind waiting outside with the door closed while you ring. Remember to keep the door chain on, if you have one, until you are sure the caller is genuine. Be wary of salespeople who call unannounced and try to persuade you to spend your money. Don't be persuaded into having repair or improvement work done by people who call on spec. If you need work done, organise it with a company or person who has been recommended to you and who you have full contact details for (not just a mobile phone number). Always seek advice from an independent source. Never sign anything on the spot. If an offer seems too good to be true, then it probably is. The best defences against a doubtful caller are a viewer or spyhole in the door and a stout door chain. Never keep a large amount of money in your house. Put it in a bank, post office or building society. Join a Neighbourhood Watch scheme if there is one local to you or talk to your local crime prevention or beat officer about setting one up. Bogus callers are criminals. They intend to get into your house using convincing acts, distraction or both. They can be smartly dressed and sometimes even have false identification. They can be young old, smart scruffy, friendly or intimidating. They will give stories about burst pipes or broken down cars. But, **THEY CAN BE BEATEN**

- Are you expecting anyone?
- Do they have an appointment?
- Are your back door and windows locked?
- Secure the door bar or chain before opening
- Ask for and double check the callers I.D.
- DO NOT let anyone in without I.D.
- DO NOT trust strangers whatever age, sex or story they give
- THEY MAY SAY
- I'm here to check water pipes.
- My car has broken down, can I use your phone.
- I've lost my football / puppy.
- You've won a raffle.
- Can I use your toilet?
- CHECK ID
- Check out I.D. by ringing the company they state they are from.
- Get the number from the phone book or directory enquiries NOT the I.D. as this may be a false number.
- Always lock them out while doing this – genuine callers will not mind.
- Use passwords – many utility companies will do this – to ensure they are from where they say they are from.

What is distraction burglary? This type of crime occurs when the offenders purport to be officials from, for example, public utilities or organisations such as the Water Board, or they use a story such as looking for a lost dog or child to gain access to someone's home and then steal valuables whilst inside. Who is the typical victim? Distraction burglars or bogus callers generally prey on the elderly - the typical victim is aged 81, female and lives alone - and often these victims are left seriously traumatized by the experience. What are Lincolnshire Police doing to stop this happening? In a bid to tackle the problem, Lincolnshire Police has joined forces with police from around the country in a national operation called Operation Liberal. What is Operation Liberal? Operation Liberal is an initiative started by Derbyshire Police in 1988. Over the years it has grown to 10 member forces - Cambridgeshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, South Yorkshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Midlands, West Mercia and Lincolnshire - and has the support of the National Crime Squad and the National Criminal Intelligence Service. Does Operation Liberal work? Operation Liberal places a large emphasis on educating the public about how to protect themselves against distraction burglary. "Studies have indicated that there is a lot of under-reporting of this type of crime. "This may be due to factors such as embarrassment, fear among the elderly that it will appear they can't cope if they report they have been a victim, or sometimes people don't even realize they have been a victim of this type of crime. Whatever the reasons we want people who have seen or heard anything suspicious to contact us. We rely on the information provided to us to catch these criminals and our databases and our intelligence will only be as good as the information we are provided with."

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