Newsletter

The Rural Beat

South Worcestershire Police

Rural and Business Crime Team

John Campion
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia

Winter 2022

The Rural Beat' is a publication from the Police in South Worcestershire for the benefit of the people who live, work and visit South Worcestershire. The aim is to provide information, advice and contact details to assist the community. We will welcome your feedback.

West Mercia
POLICE

URGENT ALERT

We are still receiving reports of Catalytic Converter Thefts from vehicles parked in car parks and home driveways

If you have any information regarding any crime you can contact police on 101, or https://www.westmercia.police.uk/.

in an emergency please dial 999.

You can also contact Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111** to report any crime or criminal activity anonymously.

Theft of Catalytic Converters

If you can, park your vehicle in a locked garage when it is unattended.

If it's not possible to garage your vehicle, park it in a busy well-lit area as close to your property as possible.

Consider installing a Thatcham approved alarm to your vehicle. Ones that activate if your vehicle is lifted or tilted are particularly effective. https://www.thatcham.org/what-we-do/security-certification/

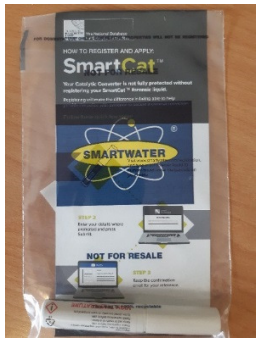
Use a catalytic converter protection device or marking system ideally approved by Sold Secure https://www.soldsecure.com/

Blocking access to the underside of fleet vehicles, If you operate a small fleet, consider obstructing access to vehicles with high ground clearance by parking lower vehicles close by. Also, keep an eye out for anyone who seems to be working underneath cars nearby, they could very well be scouting out their next target vehicle.

In order to steal the parts, thieves need to slide under the vehicle and use cutting tools to detach the box from the pipes around it. This means parking your car close to fences, walls or kerbs will make theft much more difficult.

Consider marking you catalytic converter with a forensic marking solution such as **SmartCat**

https://www.smartwater.com/



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.

If you suspect your catalytic converter has been stolen, report it to us immediately by calling 101

Recent issues

Theft from Sheds

Increasing trend of thefts from sheds in gardens and on allotments **See later on in this edition for crime prevention advice**

Heritage Crime

Report of theft of lead from a church roof and illegal metal detecting at a local heritage site

Please look out for suspicious behaviour at our local Heritage sites and contact the Police if you have any information

you can contact police on 101, or https://www.westmercia.police.uk/.

in an emergency please dial 999.

We Don't Buy Crime is West Mercia Police's response to acquisitive crime – crimes such as burglary and theft – and the associated harm it causes. These crimes can have a long lasting impact on victims, it can often leave someone feeling unsafe in their own home, and where possessions that have emotional attachment are stolen it can be heart-breaking.

We Don't Buy Crime has five key strands along with our **towns and villages**, we work with **second hand stores** and **fuel stations**, **deploy covert tactics**, and more recently look at ways our local communities can help tackle associated harm including **criminal exploitation and vulnerability.**

We currently have over 20 Towns & Villages signed up to the We Don't Buy crime Smart Water scheme in South Worcestershire and we are currently looking to sign up more!

Please encourage your local Town or Parish Council to contact us to arrange a meeting (Covid 19 Secure) so we can explain how the process could work

Calling All Farmers

Please contact us if you want to receive a FREE Farm security survey together with Smartwater marking solution and signage

Meet the Rural & Business Crime Team

Pc Nigel Bolton, Pc Ben Trowman and Rural & Business Crime Officer (RABO) Mick Simpson work across South Worcestershire, as part of a larger dedicated problem solving team and are supported by Special Constables, police volunteers and members of the public.

If you would like to help with reducing crime in your area, contact Mick Simpson on
michael.simpson@westmercia.police.uk or call 07773050803

So, what are we up to?

Taking part in the week long metal theft nationwide operation to combat catalytic converter thefts and offences involving waste metals

Mick Simpson and Pc Nige Bolton at **St Richard's Hospice** providing Smart CAT marking kits for the charity's vehicles

Mick Simpson at a Local business park marking catalytic converters

Mick Simpson and Pc Nige Bolton investigating reports of **badger set interference**

Pc Nige Bolton in Worcester handing out personal attack alarms and Anti-Drink spiking devices to the night time community

STOP PRESS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Neighbourhood Matters is the new West Mercia Police community messaging service
Sign-up NOW

Home Page - Neighbourhood Matters

Contact your Local Policing Team for more information

Some of the team's other recent activities

2 Allotments were visited and offered crime prevention advice

21 farms across South Worcestershire having been subject to crime were visited and crime prevention advice given

14 rural businesses across South Worcestershire subject to crime were visited and provide with crime prevention advice

2 covert asset deployed in rural areas

5 Joint operation with local officers to patrol Rural areas for wildlife crime and metal theft

18 Posting out Catalytic Converter marking kits to victims of those types of theft

15 bikes were marked with Smartwater at the Crowngate Shopping Centre, Worcester

Each edition will feature a crime that occurs in our Community with Crime Prevention advice

SHEDS

As hopefully the weather improves many of us will be looking into our garden sheds to find the gardening equipment we stored away last year!
A reminder that criminal will also be on the look-out for these items as well

It's strange how most people don't secure their shed or garage in the same way they do their homes. People often end up using a flimsy lock or padlock to protect the contents – whether it's a bike or lawnmower. The fact is, a burglar will usually try a shed or garage first because they can find the tools they need to get into the house.

Think like a thief

Take a look at your shed and consider how you would break in? It's worth having a good padlock on the door with no exposed screws. Pay attention to hinges, as these are sometimes easily removable. If you have windows then these could be vulnerable unless they're secured with wire mesh or grills. And keep it locked at all times.

Alarm it Consider a battery-operated shed alarm. They look low key but they respond to movement or door contact with an extremely loud siren.

Don't give them the opportunity or the tools to commit a crime. Lock everything away securely. **Tools can be locked inside a locker or box or secured with a chain.**

Secure your bike to the ground or a lockable stand within a locked shed or garage. Visit Sold Secure to search for ground anchors and other locks designed to fix to floors and walls.
Property marking your items is advisable and some tools can be painted with your name or postcode. Forensic marking such as SmartWater is also an option.

The top five most common items stolen from sheds

Online Criminality

At last! There is now one email address you can report suspicious emails too

If you receive an email which you're not quite sure about, forward it to the Suspicious Email: report@phishing.gov.uk

Suspicious Email Reporting Service (SERS) report@phishing.gov.uk

Please be aware and remain vigilant of phishing emails. One of the many scam emails currently in circulation purports to be from the TV Licensing advising to cancel direct debits. These messages may look like the real thing but are malicious. Once clicked, you are sent to a website which could download viruses onto your computer, or steal your passwords. The criminal's goal is to convince you to click on the links within their scam email or text message, or to give away sensitive information (such as bank details).

For further information and advice please go to:

https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/suspicious-email-actions

https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/about-ncsc/what-is-cyber-security

https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/

https://staysafeonline.org/stay-safe-online/

Stay Safe. Stay Connected. Stay Cyber Aware

A little bit of information goes a long way

Report suspicious activity, people or vehicles. No matter how insignificant you might think it is, if it is suspicious to you, it probably is.

Also, REPORT CRIME! We know not all crime is reported to us, and we know the many reasons for that including frustration.

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