

## What is distraction burglary?

Distraction burglary is when a person tries to gain access to your home by trying to trick you into believing they need help or are officials in the area. Very often they will operate in pairs so one attempts the distraction whilst the other one takes the opportunity to steal things in the home.

The advice is not to let anyone into your home unless you are expecting them or know them. Even if you are expecting callers from a utility company or local authority, set a password when you make the arrangements that the caller has to give on arrival. Use a door chain if possible whilst you establish the caller is genuine.

Some common distraction burglary tactics are,

- **Asking to use your phone as they have broken down**

Wanting to help people is understandable but don't let people in, once they are in it could be that their accomplice gains access whilst you are helping them. If you want to help, don't let them in but offer to call a breakdown company.

- **Pretending to be from a gas company saying there is a problem in the area**

Understandably this can cause concern if you think there is a problem, but contact the gas company to find out if this is true. Don't use the contact number the caller gives you use an official one from your bill. Check with a neighbour if you are concerned.

- **Pretending to be from the water company saying there is a problem in the area.**

By saying there is a problem and asking you to run the taps in your home the distraction burglar is sending you into your bathroom or kitchen where you may not be able to see what they are doing. Don't let them in and call your water company to check if this is a genuine problem.

- **Pretending to be Police Officers or Trading Standards Officers.**

Distraction burglars have been known to present themselves as officials. Again do not let them in. Contact your local police office or Trading Standards office to check if these officers are genuine.

For advice contact Citizens Advice consumer helpline: 03454 04 05 06 Welsh-speaking adviser: 03454 04 05 05.

**Call the police 999 if you feel at risk or are concerned for a neighbour.**