

STEER
CLEAR
OF BIKE CRIME

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A guide to motorbike and scooter security

LOCK IT, OR LOSE IT

More motorbikes and scooters than cars are stolen, and fewer are recovered. But theft doesn't have to be an inevitable part of owning a motorbike or scooter. A lot of vehicle crime results from criminals seeing opportunities and taking them. But you can outsmart most criminals by following the simple advice given in this booklet.

Remember, most bike crime can be prevented.

Don't give criminals an easy ride.



SECURE MEASURES

TEMPTING TARGETS

Motorbikes and scooters are an easy target for thieves if they are not secured and can be wheeled away or bundled into a van in seconds. The last thing any rider wants is for their pride and joy to be stolen. It may be insured for theft, but the hassle and time it takes to get the insurance money to replace it will be terrible, and your insurance premiums will go up because you've made a claim. Motorbike and scooter theft is big business, so it's important to keep them safe by taking steps to protect them and by choosing the right security devices.



HOW TO CHOOSE

Basically, the more security you can put around your motorbike or scooter, the less attractive it will be to thieves. No single product can cover all possibilities, but if you invest in both mechanical **and** electronic security devices, you will reduce the risk of becoming a victim of theft.

Always look for products recommended by 'Thatcham' or 'Sold Secure', as these have been tested to make sure they meet high standards. Some security devices may get you a discount on your insurance (up to 10% for immobilisers). Check with your insurance company to see whether having a particular immobiliser or other security device would reduce your premium.



You can get more information about alarms, immobilisers and other security devices by phoning:

- the Vehicle Security National Helpline on 0870 5502006;
- or • the Sold Secure Helpline on 01327 264687.

SECURITY MEASURES

ELECTRONIC SECURITY

Get a combined alarm and immobiliser professionally fitted as these devices really put off would-be thieves. If someone tampers with your bike, the alarm will go off and the engine will not turn over so thieves cannot ride the machine away.

Alternatively, you can buy a basic alarm or an immobiliser. Although some do-it-yourself systems are available, we do not recommend these. Also, for any discounts on your insurance cover your alarm or immobiliser must be professionally fitted by a trained dealer or installer. Features to look for when choosing an alarm or immobiliser are 'low current drain' (to avoid flattening your battery) and 'comprehensive warranty support'. Some systems even provide roadside assistance cover.



SECURE YOUR BIKE

MECHANICAL SECURITY

Chains and padlocks are the most versatile forms of mechanical security. They can be difficult to carry around but some come with bags. A good disc lock will put off casual thieves, but most will only delay a professional for a matter of seconds. **Don't rely on a disc lock alone.** U-locks are better, but make sure they're long enough to secure the bike to an object which cannot be moved.

Whatever type of lock you choose, always try to secure your motorbike or scooter to something which is solid and cannot be moved (like security rails or a ground anchor) because the most common method of stealing motorbikes and scooters is simply to lift them into the back of a van. Also, try to keep the lock off the ground as this makes it harder to break.



MARKING AND IDENTIFICATION SYSTEMS

Put security marking on as many parts of your motorbike or scooter as possible. This will make it less attractive to thieves and will also increase the chance of getting your machine back if it is stolen and then recovered. Some new motorbikes and scooters come with marking systems as standard, although you can buy systems from a reputable dealer for fitting afterwards.

Mark parts with the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) (frame number), registration number, your postcode or some other unique identifying number linked to a recognised database which keeps to the Loss Prevention Council (LCP) standards 1224 and 1225, which have been approved by the police.



Alternatively, you can add your own markings (the VIN or registration number) in ultraviolet pen. This can increase the chance of you getting your motorbike or scooter back if it is stolen and then recovered.

The crime prevention officer at your local police station will be able to give you advice and further information on suitable marking systems.



AT HOME

Remember that your motorbike or scooter is still at risk of being stolen when it is parked at your home. Ground anchors are good for protecting your machine at home. If you have a garage, fit stronger locks too. Some motorbike alarms (including silent alarms) can alert you if someone is trying to get into your garage.



STOLEN GOODS

A lot of stolen motorbikes and scooters, or their parts, are sold on to the public. If you are offered a 'bargain' you could be buying something that has been stolen. Stick to reputable shops and dealers.



0800 555 111

If you have any information about criminal activity, particularly concerning motorbikes or scooters stolen for spare parts or items stolen from these machines and then sold to the public, you can contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111. You do not have to give your name.

SECURE PURCHASE

BUYING A NEW MOTORBIKE OR SCOOTER

When buying a **new** motorbike or scooter always ask yourself the following questions.

- Does it have an insurer-approved alarm, immobiliser or mechanical security? Check with your insurance company beforehand to find out which security features may reduce your premiums.
- Does it have an insurer-approved security marking system?
- What other security features does it come with and are they approved by insurers?
- What extra insurer-approved security can the dealer offer?



BUYING A SECOND-HAND MOTORBIKE OR SCOOTER

When buying a **second-hand** motorbike or scooter always ask yourself the following questions.

- Have you seen the original registration document?
- If you have seen the original registration document, does it appear genuine, does it have a watermark, and are there any alterations?



- Is the seller's name on the registration document?
If not, why?
- Has the machine's frame or engine number been tampered with? If you are not sure, compare it with a similar number.
- Do the frame and engine numbers of the machine match those on the registration document?
- If electronic security is fitted, does the owner have the correct Certificate of Installation, transmitters or touch keys and so on?
- Can the seller provide proof of their identity and address?
- Is the seller insisting on meeting you away from the registered address, possibly to avoid being identified or traced?
- Before buying privately, consider checking the machine's history by phoning HPI Group Ltd, the AA or the RAC (details are given in the 'Contacts' section). For a charge they can check the status of the machine you are thinking of buying in order to save you a lot of problems later on.



**Do not part with any money if you have any doubts.
Contact the crime prevention officer at your local
police station for advice.**



SECURITY CHECK

SECURITY TIPS

- If your motorbike or scooter doesn't already have one, get a 'Thatcham'- or 'Sold Secure'- approved electronic immobiliser professionally fitted. Try to get one which is also approved by your insurance company.
- If you have a security device, use it and keep your keys with you when you leave your machine.
- Always put the steering lock on.
- Never leave your keys with the motorbike or scooter, even for a short time. Always keep your keys in a safe place when you are at home.
- Wherever possible, use parking spaces which are built especially for motorbikes and have stands or security loops for you to secure your machine to. Also, look for secured motorbike or scooter parking spaces in public car parks which are in the police-approved 'Secure Car Parks' scheme.
- When you are not using your motorbike or scooter, put it in your garage (if you have one) and make sure it has good locks. If you do not have a garage, ground anchors are a good bet.
- Get the main parts of your machine marked with the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) (frame number), registration number or other unique identifying number, ideally one linked to a recognised database that meets LCP standards 1224 and 1225. If you have used your own markings, make sure you keep a record of them.



- Cover your machine if possible.
- Whenever possible, avoid leaving your helmet or other possessions on the motorbike or scooter, or in luggage space on panniers.

BIKE WATCH SCHEMES AND ASSOCIATIONS

There is considerable opportunity for anti-theft schemes that encourage motorcyclists and others to spot motorbike and scooter theft and come up with new ideas to tackle it. Contact your local crime prevention officer or the various motorcycle support groups (such as the Motorcycle Action Group or the British Motorcyclists' Federation) for information about local groups and advice on how to set up new ones (see the 'Contacts' section at the end of this leaflet).



SECURITY CHECK

PROTECTING YOUR OFF-ROAD MOTORBIKE

Off-road bikes (such as trials, motocross and enduro bikes) are at special risk of theft. Also, if they are stolen they are more difficult to trace because they are not registered on the DVLA computer.

This means that the police cannot put the details of stolen off-road bikes on their computer in order to trace the owner when the bikes are recovered. So it may not always be possible to return off-road bikes to their rightful owners. However, DVLA can register your off-road bike for free so that its details (frame and engine numbers) are placed on the DVLA's and the police's computers. It will be given a 'Q' registration mark but you do not have to display a numberplate unless you want to. You will also be given a log book. You will not be able to ride the vehicle on the road unless it is completely legal and you have paid the correct VED (Vehicle Excise Duty) road tax. You do not need an insurance or MOT certificate for off-road use. Contact your local DVLA office to discuss this further (their number is in the 'useful numbers' section of the phone book under the heading 'Government').



OTHER MEASURES

CONTROL OF REGISTRATION DOCUMENTS

If you own a motorbike or scooter it is in your best interests to stop its registration documents (Form V5) falling into the wrong hands and being used for stolen motorbikes and scooters. If your machine is written off by your insurer, ask your insurer to pass the registration document to the DVLA. The DVLA now encourages insurance companies to return all registration documents for written-off vehicles to prevent them being misused by criminals.



HOW EMPLOYERS CAN HELP

Companies which employ motorcyclists, such as couriers, should promote security awareness among their riders. They could consider, for example, including theft awareness leaflets in wage packets and provide secure parking spaces or changing areas for riders.



MOTORBIKE AND SCOOTER DEALERS

Dealers should make it standard procedure to check any machine brought in for service if they do not know its background. This is especially important if they are asked to supply duplicate keys.



CONTACTS

CRIME PREVENTION OFFICERS - you can contact a crime prevention officer at your local police station for crime prevention advice and a list of secured car parks in your area.

THATCHAM (The Motor Insurance Repair Research Centre) - for information on immobilisers and other vehicle security devices.

Colthrop Lane, Thatcham
Berkshire, RG19 4NP

Vehicle Security National Helpline
Phone: 0870 550 2006
Website: www.thatcham.org

SOLD SECURE - for a list of recognised security products.
Phone: 01327 264687
Website: www.soldsecure.com
E-mail: admin@soldsecure.com

ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH INSURERS (ABI) - for information on insurance group ratings and vehicle security.

51 Gresham Street, London, EC2V 7HQ
Phone: 0207 600 3333
Website: www.abi.org.uk
E-mail: info@abi.org.uk

AA - for machine inspections and history checks.
Phone: 0870 600 0371
Website: www.theaa.co.uk
E-mail: customer.services@theaa.com

RAC - for machine inspections and history checks.
Phone: 0870 533 3660
Website: www.rac.co.uk

VEHICLE SECURITY INSTALLATION BOARD - for a copy of the list of fully accredited installation companies. Companies covered in Part VI of the list are accredited to deal with motorbikes and scooters.

Bates Business Centre, Church Road
Harold Wood, Romford, Essex, RM3 0JF
Phone: 01708 340911
Website: www.vsib.co.uk

HPI GROUP LTD - for a check on the status of a second-hand machine.

Dolphin House, PO Box 61, New Street
Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP1 2TB
Phone: 01722 422422
Website: www.hpicheck.com

BRITISH MOTORCYCLISTS' FEDERATION
14-16 Briton Street, Leicester, LE5 0AA
Website: www.bmf.co.uk
E-mail: enquiry@bmf.co.uk

MOTORCYCLE ACTION GROUP
Central Office, PO Box 750, Rugby, CV21 3ZR
Website: www.mag-uk.org
E-mail: central-office@mag-uk.org

CRIMESTOPPERS - if you have any information on motorbike or scooter crime.

Crimestoppers Trust
Apollo House, 66A London Road
Morden, Surrey, SM4 5BE
Phone: 0800 555111
Website: www.crimestoppers-uk.org

Useful crime prevention advice, including this leaflet, can also be found on the crime reduction website.
www.crimereduction.gov.uk

