

An Garda Síochána

Crime Prevention Information Sheet



Vehicle Security

Bicycles



Introduction

With ever increasing fuel costs, more and more people are using bicycles for travel purposes. Safety is, of course, paramount and it is very important that bicycles are used in a safe manner. Wear appropriate safety gear at all times. Ensure that the bicycle is kept mechanically safe with good brakes, appropriate lights / reflectors, sound tyres etc. However, it is also important to consider security as bicycles are often an easy target for thieves. Figures for recent years, show that over 2000 bicycles per annum are taken without the authorised consent of the owner. The advice offered in this information sheet can help to reduce the risk of your bicycle being stolen.

Basic Precautions

When you first get your bicycle there are a number of matters you should attend to -

- Take at least one distinguishing coloured photograph of your bicycle.
- Keep a written record of the make, model and frame number of the bike and any unique features that the bike may have e.g. extra fittings, attachments, markings etc. Remember to also update as the bike gets older - it is unlikely that it will still be in pristine condition and will more likely have dents and scratches.



- Security mark your bicycle in at least two separate places. Your security mark should be clearly visible and not capable of being easily removed or camouflaged. You may need, particularly with light-framed (e.g. aluminium alloy) bicycles, to have this done by a specialist or suitably qualified person. Consider also advertising the fact that the bike is security marked with an appropriate label/sticker etc. Advice on security marking is available in our separate information sheet or from your local Crime Prevention Officer.
- Consider insuring your bicycle, either through a separate policy or through your home contents insurance.
- The owners of very valuable bicycles should also consider having an electronic tracking device covertly inserted within the frame.

Security at Home

When at home, your bike should be kept in a secure location out of public view. Avoid leaving your bicycle unattended in your driveway, even for short periods. Garages and sheds are frequently used and these should be kept locked. It is also a good idea to secure your bike within the garage/shed by fixing or locking to a wall or other immovable object. If keeping outdoors, secure the bike to an immovable object - do not leave it lying around and un-locked.

Security in Public Places

When out and about on your bike there are a number of precautions you should take.

- Always lock your bike, even if leaving it for a few brief moments.
- Lock your bike to an immovable object e.g. a metal railing or lamppost. Be aware, if using a lamppost, of the possibility of lifting the locked bicycle over the lamppost.
- Lock your frame and wheels if at all possible.
- Where bicycles parks are available, use them.
- Take all accessories and easily removable objects with you.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS OR OTHER CRIME PREVENTION ISSUES,
PLEASE CONTACT
your local GARDA CRIME PREVENTION OFFICER
or
visit the Garda website at www.garda.ie**

- Consider replacing quick release levers with normal nuts and bolts or with special locking nuts and bolts.
- Do not leave / park your bike in isolated, dark or dimly lit places
- Try not to leave / lock your bike in the same place every day.

Locking your Bike

There are many different types of lock available that can be used for locking your bicycle. When choosing a lock you should consider how much your bicycle is worth, where you will leave it, how long it will be left unattended and the strength and weight of the lock etc. Most bicycles are locked using the following means -

- D locks / U locks
- Cable locks
- Chain and padlocks, and
- Click locks.

D locks / U locks - are rigid steel locks in a D or U shape. They are generally heavy and strong, though the strength can vary and is normally reflected in the price. There are limitations as to where these locks can be utilised e.g. they may not fit around many lampposts.



Cable locks - are flexible and can be used in many situations. Cables, of course, can vary significantly in both weight and strength. Invariably, cheap and thinner cables can easily be cut and so should not be used as a sole locking method.



Chains and Padlocks - will also vary in both weight and strength. Heavier ones can be awkward to carry around and manoeuvre around frames and lampposts or railings. Good quality hardened chains and padlocks do offer good security. It is important, however, to keep the chain and lock off the ground/pavement or against

walls when your bike is secured as the chain or lock can easily be broken with a sledgehammer or cold chisel if resting on these areas.



Similarly, keep your chain wrapped as tightly as possible around the frame and the immovable object that you are locking it to - this can help to stop thieves from inserting 'jimmy' bars into spaces and gaps and forcing the chain or lock apart. For similar reasons, closed shackle padlocks are recommended in preference to open shackled padlocks.

Click locks - are not very common. They are generally fixed to the frame over the rear wheel, under and close to the seat. They lock your wheel to the frame, thereby stopping somebody from simply riding away but offer no protection from somebody picking up the bike and walking away with it.

The advice contained in this information sheet is not intended to be exhaustive or absolute.

Nothing contained in this publication should be interpreted as mandatory, obligatory or designed to conflict with any statutory regulations.

Useful Contacts and Links

The Garda National Crime Prevention Unit,
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