



Fire Protection
Association®



S36 Countryside Crime



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1 Introduction

Countryside crime, which within the scope of this guide, broadly covers theft from farms and other rural sites, and livestock rustling, is a growing problem in the UK.

Aggravating factors include:

- Rural communities are not confident that police forces are able to adequately support them due to resourcing constraints and other priorities (although some police force areas have implemented dedicated rural crime teams).
- Members of rural communities can feel vulnerable due to the remoteness of houses, businesses, and farms and the lack of easy access to communications infrastructure (telecoms, broadband, and other services).
- Rural crime gangs can be very organised, with serious thefts being carefully planned and mapping technology used to plan escape routes.

Many of the strategies and prevention measures for prevention and reduction of countryside crime, are common across the range of theft-types, but for simplicity, the key issues and prevention measures are listed for each of the theft types specified below, with some more detailed advice in the Appendix.

A useful police website covering countryside crime is provided by the Metropolitan Police: Rural Crime Prevention: <https://www.met.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/rc/rural-crime/rural-crime-prevention/>.

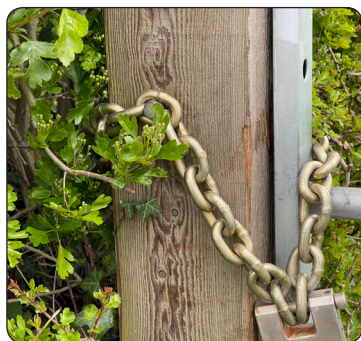
2 Fixed asset protection

Remote farm buildings, business premises, and rural dwellings are particularly vulnerable to theft, although most protection measures are common with urban buildings and include installation of good physical security (e.g. shutters, padlocks).

It is also essential that buildings are of adequate overall construction to prevent walls and roofs being easily breached. This is of relevance where light-construction agricultural buildings have been converted or part-converted for retail use.

Recommendations for essential theft prevention for buildings include:

- Equip exterior doors and windows with suitable tamperproof locks.
For detailed guidance, refer to S24 *Physical Security for Homes: Guidance for Occupiers*.
- Install a security alarm system for when premises are unoccupied, with combinations of doors and window tamper alarms and movement detection. Door sensors to also be provided on key internal doors. Window sensors should be provided for both opening and non-openable windows. For detailed guidance, refer to S34 *Intruder Alarm Systems: Ten-Step Guide for Purchasers*.
- Also, for doors and windows:
 - Consider steel lining of 'concealed' doors at rear of premises, e.g. external fire exit doors that can be tampered with unobserved.
 - Suitably protect retail-unit fronts against anticipated forms of attack, bearing in mind the risk and its surroundings.
For detailed guidance, refer to S10 *Guidance for Protection of Premises Against Vehicle Attacks (Ram Raids)*.
- Provide recorded VSS (Video Surveillance System, aka CCTV) in and around parking areas and buildings – see Appendix. For detailed guidance, refer to S23 *Guidance for Specifiers of VSS in Security Applications*.



- Secure physical barriers to the site with good quality padlocks, e.g. those conforming to BS EN 12320: *Building hardware. Padlocks and padlock fittings*, at Grade 4 or above.
- Mark computer equipment, tools etc. with both visible and covert security markings – see Appendix – Log security marked items.
- In retail premises, where high-value stock or items particularly attractive to thieves are stored, such as alcohol, consider installing a security cage or similar theft resistant enclosure, where target stock can be kept out of trading hours. Also, keep target stock to a minimum on display in trading areas.
- Additional theft-protection measures to consider for retail premises include:
 - Shutters/grilles for shop front protection.
Note that external protection will protect the shop-front glazing but is unsightly and local planning permission may be required.
 - Enhanced security glazing e.g. laminate glass.
 - Internal shop-front theft protection. Whilst not protecting glazing from attack, this will delay intruders and can be arranged to provide early alarm activation.
- Never leave shipments of stock or machinery in unattended loading areas/docks.
- Install security lighting.

3 Agricultural plant and all-terrain-vehicles (ATVs)

Preventative measures that we see at other domestic and commercial premises may not be present on farms and rural garages, and agricultural machinery/vehicle dealerships. This can create vulnerabilities e.g. inadequate or inconsistent levels of site 'perimeter' security.

Equipment at risk is often stored in outbuildings (often open fronted), with construction (as related to theft resilience) inferior to many urban commercial/industrial premises.

Whereas rural business parks (agricultural dealers etc.) may have reasonable levels of perimeter and building security, they are still susceptible to theft losses due to a combination of their remoteness and having large quantities of highly theft-attractive equipment stored together.

Other worsening factors are that rural criminal gangs are likely to have a high awareness of which brands of agricultural machinery, quad bikes, and ATVs can be stolen most easily or started without a key, and recovering of stolen agricultural machinery and vehicles can be exacerbated by low take-up of 'item level' security devices, such as immobilisers or vehicle locating systems/trackers, unless mandated by insurers (due to high single article values).

Recommended theft prevention measures for farm vehicles, plant, trailers, and mobile agricultural machinery, when not being used include:

- Immobilise or otherwise physically secure expensive machinery/vehicles (e.g. store in locked secure buildings, consider using hitch locks & wheel clamps).
- Always remove ignition keys from parked vehicles, even when vehicles are being left only for a short period. Store removed keys in a secure location.
- Key security for vehicles and machinery should be to the same standard as at urban motor trade premises.
- Consider adding electronic alarms and/or immobilisers if not already fitted, preferably those with Thatcham Security Certification.
- Move plant and vehicles to a secure area, ideally in a secure building or secure compound/vehicle-park at night and when not being used. As a minimum, if a secure compound is not available, park vehicles/plant overnight next to occupied farm buildings.
- Mark vehicles and mobile plant/machinery with both visible and covert security markings – see Appendix – Log security marked items.
- Provide recorded VSS in and around parking areas and buildings.



- Keep security gates to yards and forecourts locked closed when not in use and lock the outbuildings in which machinery and vehicles are stored, using a heavy-duty locking-bar with security padlocks. Lockable, removable security posts are an alternative to security gates.
- Block unused entrances to fields that could be used to facilitate agricultural machinery theft.
- Install outside security lights activated by infra-red beams that react to heat or movement.
- Install security alarms for buildings in which vehicles and machinery are stored.
- Keep trailers in the same or similar theft-protected areas as other equipment and vehicles, applying similar security criteria. Special attention should be given to theft-protection of any loaded trailers left overnight – see Appendix.
- Ensure that parking areas (permanent or temporary) where large vehicles that could be used to drive away stolen ATVs and portable equipment, have stand-off measures, such as lockable bollards. This will force would-be thieves to park their trucks, trailers, etc. at a distance from the target, reducing opportunity.
- Maintain a detailed inventory list, including the identification numbers of all plant and machinery.

Whilst not specifically listed in the recommendations above, local audible deterrents are good additional protective measure – see Self Help.

For theft protection of GPS equipment/trackers from agricultural vehicles:

- Apply general security guidelines for prevention of theft of farm vehicles, plant, trailers, and mobile agricultural machinery – see above.
- Use devices with PIN security and activate using a unique number (never leave the default).
- Mark GPS devices with a covert security marking – see Appendix – Log security marked items.
- Remove (non-integrated) GPS devices from vehicles/plant and store securely when not in use.
- Make a record of all GPS device serial numbers, along with a photo of the device.
- Only purchase second-hand devices from trusted vendors.

For theft protection of four-wheel drive vehicles, quad bikes, and ATVs:

- Apply general security guidelines for prevention of theft of farm vehicles, plant, trailers, and mobile agricultural machinery – see above.
- Keep ATVs and quad bikes that could be attractive to opportunistic thieves out of sight from surrounding nearby roads and footpaths.
- For overnight security of ATVs and quad bikes, immobilise or use wheel-locks and secure attachment to ground anchors, or chain up in a locked building.
- Take photos and details of chassis numbers and record serial numbers of equipment.

4 Rural cash theft

Cash robberies from farm shops are increasing, especially as rural banks where cash can be deposited are closing.

Recommendations for cash theft prevention:

- Apply a high standards of physical building security, alarms, VSS, etc, as recommended for buildings (above).

- Keep cash kept onsite to a minimum, by encouraging card/contactless purchases, with frequent cash collection (by cash-in-transit companies) and banking.
- Removal of cash from business premises overnight.
- Cash kept on site should be stored securely in an insurer-approved safe (appropriate for the maximum cash limit at the facility) that is fixed to the ground in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Combination safes may be preferable as they remove the need to manage the transfer of keys between different persons, and the combination can be changed if a member of staff leaves the business.
- For larger cash holdings on site, safes with multiple locking arrangements or time-delay safes that can only be opened at pre-agreed cash collection times should be used.
- Where practical, remove cash cassettes from vending machines and convenience-ATMs each night.
- Carry out criminal background checks on all new hires handling cash. Refer to <https://www.gov.uk/employers-checks-job-applicants>.
- If there is reliance on paper records, keep all invoices and receiving records in a suitable office datasafe.

5 Fuel theft

Fuel tanks within agricultural sites are often attractive to fuel thieves. These tanks, where primary hazard considerations relate to ventilation and fire safety, can lack the standard physical layers of theft security that can be more readily applied to other installations.

- Apply relevant general security guidelines for prevention of agricultural machinery – see above.
- Site fuel tanks where they can be monitored and away from rights-of-way where they will be easily accessible.
- Site fuel tanks in secure areas, e.g. gated yards.
- Consider installing a cage/fence (not impeding ventilation) around fuel tanks to provide a physical perimeter barrier.
- Securely lock fuel tanks' stores when not in use. This relates to both fuel tank buildings and portable tank storage buildings.
- Install proprietary tank locks for the caps and fuel-valves, or securely padlock fuel valves shut when not in use.
- Consider installing fuel tank filling cap alarms and general movement sensor alarms in-and-around the tank installations, to provide an alert to activity around fuel tanks.
- Use armoured fuel hoses that are difficult to cut.
- Fit anti-siphon devices into fuel tank filler pipes.
- Install recorded VSS in and around fuel tank areas – see Appendix.
- Where theft of fuel from plant left overnight has been an issue, consider not refuelling prior to stopping for the night.

Note that selection and siting of electrical equipment near to fuel tanks must be subject to a DSEAR* risk assessment.

*Dangerous Substances
and Explosive Atmospheres
Regulations 2002 (DSEAR)

6 Fly tipping



To help prevent fly-tipping apply a combination of the measures below:

- Install physical barriers on approach roads and other access points, secured by padlocks, to limit access.
- Install recorded VSS in vulnerable areas.
- Install ANPR (automatic number plate recognition) cameras.
Note that this is mainly to put on social media groups for vehicles that have been locally identified as suspicious.
- Improve lighting and visibility i.e. 'natural' surveillance.
- Where possible deny access to dead-ends and unsecure secluded areas, by use of:
 - Concrete blocks placed in rows; preferably proprietary interlocking security barriers.
 - Earth mounds or harsh landscaping.
 - Heavy boulders.
 - Planting of sharp and spikey plants.
- If falling victim to fly tipping, remove waste as soon as possible, to discourage other offenders from adding to it.

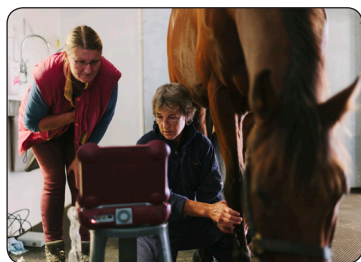
7 Metal theft

Deficient security measures for metals with an attractive scrap value, stored in accessible areas around buildings or forming the exterior surface of buildings, make them a target for thieves. Aluminium, copper, nickel, bronze, lead, and other 'non-ferrous metals', typically have a higher scrap price per tonne, than for ferrous metals (i.e. metals formed substantially of iron), making non-ferrous metals particularly attractive. Detailed advice on prevention of metal theft is provided in S21 *Measures for the Control of Metal Theft*.

8 Animal-related crime

The following are key crime prevention measures relating to livestock theft/rustling:

- Make regular checks of the fields/site perimeters where animals are kept, checking that fences haven't been breached.
- Provide recorded VSS (and security lighting where appropriate) covering the area where livestock are held.
- Mechanically tag or brand livestock to help enable identification of the stolen animals, noting that ear tags do have an electronic element. For equine, always tag-electronically – see below.
Be aware that there is a food chain hazard with all forms of animal tagging that needs to be considered when animals are slaughtered.
- Use warning signs to show that livestock is 'tagged'.
- Maintain detailed inventories for cattle/livestock including ID numbers.



- Provide good physical security e.g. fences, gates, barriers to road access, etc.

Note:

- *Fence and hedge arrangements that allow passers-by (and the police) to see through, will enhance the opportunities for detection of intruders.*
- *To prevent gates being lifted off hinges, hinge pins should have a suitably sized nut (or similar) welded to their tops. Securing the gate with an additional padlock and chain at the hinged side, or reverse orientated hinge pins are other alternatives.*
- Enhance control of access to land with measures to add layers of protection, e.g.
 - Ditches/earth bunds around the perimeter.
 - Good quality padlocks to gates.
 - Barriers across access points.
- Graze livestock away from roads.
- House livestock and horses indoors when practical.

To specifically address equine theft/equine pharmaceutical theft:

- Follow all theft prevention advice for livestock – above.
- Microchip horses in addition to any branding (as required by UK law).
- Install motion sensor lighting around stables where horses are kept at night.
- Install recorded VSS covering the areas where horses are stabled and where equine pharmaceuticals are stored.
- Secure horse trailers in line with advice for 'Agricultural plant and ATVs' (see above), with specific consideration that horse trailers can also be used to facilitate removal of animals. Specifically:
 - Don't leave trailers in fields or unattended farmyards.
 - Use wheel clamps, ground anchors, hitch locks (mechanical device on towbar attachments) to prevent removal.
 - Store trailers in secure buildings if possible.
- Secure all tack-gear/supplies in a secure tack room, with high-cost horse care items, and supplies, stored in a locked storage area.
- Ensure that vehicles used to transport tack and other equipment to/from are kept locked, and monitored as practical, when attending horse shows.
- Permanently mark/etch valuable tack and equipment with identification numbers/codes.
- Provide a layered security approach to prevent pharmaceutical theft: i.e. combinations of physical security to buildings, alarm protection (with remote signalling), and internal 'strong points' (pharmaceuticals safe or similar).
- Restrict access to drugs and medicines to designated employees.
- Controlled substances to always be kept in secure cabinets with keys removed when not in use.
- Complete regular inventories of pharmaceuticals, including a system for recording and tracking medication withdrawals.
- For large-scale equine pharmaceutical users, consider using RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) technology for real-time inventory tracking and management of pharmaceuticals, to reduce the risks of a shortage of essential drugs and prevent counterfeit drugs from entering the legal supply chain.

9 Dog attacks



Whilst not theft-related, dog attacks to livestock and equine can be devastating. To help reduce and prevent this, the following measures are recommended:

- Install suitable signage/deterrent notices, especially where there are public rights of way present, e.g. "Dog owners to keep dogs on leads around livestock".
- Install and maintain mesh fences or walls, to make it more difficult for dogs to gain access.
- Inform neighbours not to leave dogs unsupervised and to only walk dogs at a distance from livestock.
- Alert other farmers in the area if dogs are loose near livestock.

10 Self-help

In addition to the above theft prevention recommendation, basic self-help style measures can reduce theft by deterring intruders. These include:

- Deterrent signage such as "Beware of Dogs"; "Beware of Bulls".
- Implementing Agri-watch schemes.
Note that this is equivalent to neighbourhood watch and can be implemented using social media technology.
- Aim to keep farm buildings in remote areas occupied, e.g. let farm cottages to farm workers.
- Encourage rural crime to be reported.
- Where security guarding is used, only employ private security companies with recognised industry credentials, e.g. membership of the Security Industry Authority's (SIA) 'Approved Contractor Scheme' or National Security Inspectorate (NSI)/Security Systems and Alarms Inspection Board (SSAIB) registered firms. Always avoid non-recognised security personnel and forming of vigilante groups.
- Place fallen tree limbs and logs along susceptible stretches of fence and hedgerows to deter livestock rustling and general trespassing. This forces rustlers/trespassers to use gates or take the time to clear the debris, providing additional time that they may be seen. Removal of the blockage may require additional tools and the work to remove may alert people, livestock, and dogs.
- Consider how addition of local audible deterrents can enhance other measures. Thieves dislike anything that creates noise and draws attention to their presence. Simple measures like the presence of dogs in farmyards and surfaces with audible qualities such as loose-gravel, can be effective in helping to prevent thefts.

Appendix

The following are specific theft-prevention measures to improve and develop the recommendations in the various sections above:

- Always install intruder alarm protection with remote signalling (e.g. IP, BT Redcare Products, CSL DualCom) connected to a permanently manned Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC). Refer to S34 *Intruder Alarm Systems: Ten-Step Guide for Purchasers* or link VSS/ motion-detection to mobile phones of key personnel/site-owners, i.e. automated alarm messaging. This can be arranged that when cameras or motion detectors pick up movement, CCTV images are sent directly to mobile phones.
- Ensure that motion detectors (PIR sensors) are not concealed by obstructions such as shelving, reducing their full operating angle.
- Ensure motion detectors cannot be tampered with by the public; with regular inspections of these detectors to check for any tampering.
- Change security alarm system codes regularly and deactivate redundant or mislaid security fobs.
- Extend recorded VSS cameras to cover roads around protected sites that can identify information on vehicles involved in thefts to the police, to assist in tracing perpetrators and recovering property. This can also provide a good additional deterrent.
- For banknotes kept in retail premises, consider intruder DNA automatic spray systems. This can be linked to intruder alarms for out-of-hours protection and to panic buttons for daytime robberies.
- For security marking, use dispersed and permanent markings, such as security microdots and metal etching, or a proprietary traceable liquid and forensic asset marking system.
- Log security marked items on a database to support police enquiries and return of stolen property, such as the Construction & Agricultural Equipment Security and Registration Scheme (CESAR) or The Equipment Register (TER): www.cesarscheme.org; <https://www.ter-europe.org>.
- Consider fitting security tracking devices to high-value and essential equipment.
- With regard to selection of good-quality physical security products such as hitch locks for trailers the 'Sold Secure' organisation tests products to a range of security specifications, qualifying products being labelled as meeting the Sold Secure 'Bronze', 'Silver', or 'Gold' security level, according to the level of resistance they provide. To locate suppliers of Sold Secure tested products, visit <http://www.soldsecure.com>
Note: The specification for mechanical products for caravans and trailers is SS103 (hitch locks would be covered by this). For ground anchors and security posts the specification is SS105.
- Damage caused by vehicle in ramraids can cost much more than the loss of stock/cash. For detailed guidance refer to S10 *Guidance for Protection of Premises Against Vehicle Attacks (Ram Raids)*. Key protection measures include:
 - Security posts external to property.
 - Large planters or permanently fixed seats outside the premises.
 - Shop front design incorporating strong stall risers etc (layers of brickwork/masonry below window).

For detailed guidance relating to perimeter security, external security lighting, and manned guarding, refer to RISC Authority Site Security Briefing Notes available at thefpa.co.uk/index-of-resources:

- Fences, walls, and gates.
- External and perimeter security systems.
- External security lighting.
- Manned guarding.



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