



NIFC COMMUNITY AWARENESS UPDATE



NIFC COMMUNITY AWARENESS UPDATE 2/23 (1 Mar 23)

(The Community Awareness Update provides general information to enable personnel to keep up-to-date with routine correspondence; it is not provided for mission-related items and does not replace the Emergency Messaging System.)

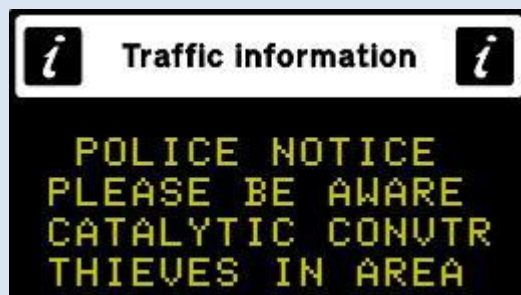
Some general Crime Prevention information to maintain your situational awareness; remember, if you think something is suspicious or unusual, assume it is and consider reporting to the appropriate organisation.

- **Catalytic Converter Thefts**
- **Courier/Delivery Scams**
- **Distraction Crime**
- **What is Wildlife Crime?**
- **How safe is London for visitors?**

Catalytic converter thefts:

Earlier this month Cambs Police advised that catalytic converter theft figures had risen by 141% over the past four years. Thieves are not letting up and there continues to be daily reports of thefts. However, Cambs Police continue to fight this crime to stop these gangs and make Cambridgeshire an uncomfortable place for them to target. They are carrying out daily patrols, with the police helicopter and Road Policing Unit on standby to assist us, and they are working with scrap dealers to ensure the thieves are not able to sell on any stolen metal.

Those of you driving in and out of Cambridge this past week may have spotted these signs around the city.



It takes just minutes to remove a catalytic converter and on many occasions victims are unaware their vehicle has been targeted even though it was sat on their driveway. The theft is normally done by groups of three or four men, wearing balaclavas and gloves, jacking up vehicles and using an angle grinder to cut out the catalytic converter.

Please do not approach these people as they are known to carry weapons.

Instead call 999 and provide as much information as you can about the vehicle they are using, in particular the make, model and colour.

Remember:

- If you see a car jacked up
- If you hear the sound of metal being cut
- It's likely a cat converter theft is taking place
- Call 999

Is it an emergency? Call 999

If it is not life threatening: Call 101 for the Civil Police; Call 111 for the NHS.

If you want to report a concern anonymously, you can report it via the Crimestoppers website or via their hotline on: 0800 555 111.

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Courier/Delivery Scams:

Parcel delivery scams are messages that pretend to come from delivery companies. This type of scam can crop up more at Christmas, when you might have more parcels being delivered than usual.

How does a parcel delivery scam work?

In periods where you are more likely to be buying lots of items online – like Christmas – you may receive a text or email claiming to be from a delivery company. The message may say that your package is delayed, or needs a small payment to be delivered. These messages can be difficult to tell apart from a real text or email. The goal of the scam could be to trick you into entering your card details into a fraudulent website.

Or, the scam may encourage you to install an app or click a link that contains spyware. This is software used to steal personal and banking details.

There can sometimes be another step. You may be contacted after the initial fraud has taken place to encourage you to move money into a scammers account for 'safety'.

If you think you've received a parcel scam – **don't open any links** that are attached the text or email.

Parcel delivery scams explained:

As people save time by buying online, there is an increase in criminals sending emails and texts posing as delivery companies. These messages can be really convincing. They often contain a link to a fake website, or a demand for courier fees. When people are busy or waiting for parcels, they're much more likely to fall for this type of scam.

Examples of parcel delivery scams:

There are lots of ways a parcel delivery scam can work, for example, you may receive a message claiming that:

- A small fee has to be paid to get your package – it may try to scare you by stating your package will be sent back or to a depot if you don't pay.
- A package you've sent will be returned, as the address was incorrect. You'll be asked to enter your personal and payment details.
- A company tried to deliver a package, but you were out. Often this scam will include a link to schedule redelivery.

A parcel isn't going to be delivered unless you download an app. These apps can contain spyware to capture your personal details when you next use them.

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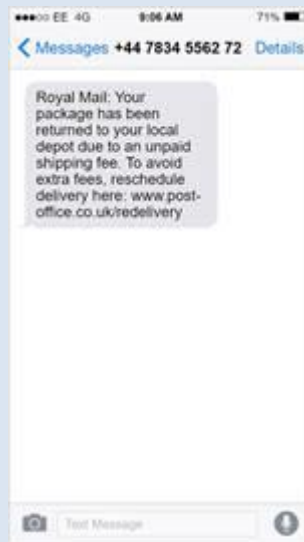
How to spot a parcel delivery scam:

Check the number: A scam text message will often arrive as a mobile number, rather than from an official source.

They try to rush you: A scam will often try to get you to act quickly, without taking a second to think. If a message is trying to get you to give them your details quickly, this is suspicious.

Lacks details about your package: Delivery scams are often vague and won't be specific about where the parcel is coming from – or what's inside.

Spelling and grammatical errors: A common way to spot a scam is spelling errors – check for mistakes or broken English. You may also see exclamation marks or strange capitalisation on fraudulent messages.



Royal Mail will never use text or email to collect fees: If your message is from Royal Mail and it's asking you to pay a fee, you can be sure it's a scam. Royal Mail will never ask you to pay fees in this way.

How to report a parcel delivery scam - if you've received a suspicious message, you can report it.

Report a scam text: To report a parcel delivery scam that you've received over text, forward it on for free to **7726**. Most phone networks support this scheme.

Report a scam email: If the scam has arrived in your inbox, you can report it by emailing a screenshot to report@phishing.gov.uk

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Local Crime Notification: A report from our Roving Reporter that last Wed/Thu (between 0300-0430) the Belle Isle/Hansell Rd area in Brampton village (and likely other areas locally) was subjected to 2 or 3 people systematically trying to open the door handles on every car on the estate. A reminder to ensure that your vehicle is locked and no V&A items are left in view. Also worth noting that if you have CCTV and/or doorbell cameras you might capture images of such actions if it happens in your area.

Distraction burglaries:

Reported across Northants but likely to be trend in all areas; recent reports of distraction burglaries whereby the offenders are pretending to be from the local water provider.

If you have elderly relatives/neighbours, please advise to be alert and, if not sure, do not open the door.

Distraction burglary

Distraction burglars pretend to be someone they are not in order to gain entry to your home.

Common methods used by distraction burglars

- Pretending to be from a care agency, the council or a utility company investigating a gas or water leak
- seeking help to leave a note for a neighbour or even asking for a drink of water if they claim to be thirsty or unwell
- Claiming to be in a hurry or emergency and needing to get into your home quickly
- working in teams, with one person distracting you while the other searches your home

How to prevent it

There are a number of things you can do to prevent distraction burglary. Always remember "if in doubt, keep them out":

- Use your door viewer to see who's there
- If you open the door put the chain on first
- Always ask for ID and check it with the company before letting somebody into your home
- Use the phone number advertised in the phone book or online, as the number on their identity card could be fake. For a utility company, call the customer service department. Close the door while you do this
- Remember that genuine callers won't mind checks. If you feel at all unsure, schedule a time for the caller to come back when a friend or relative is there
- For pre-planned appointments with utility companies, a password scheme can be set up



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What is wildlife crime?

Wildlife crime is any activity that goes against legislation protecting the UK's wild animals and plants. It can cause pain and suffering to animals, push species closer to extinction and can be linked to other serious crimes like firearms offences and organised crime. Wildlife law is complicated and it can be hard to know whether something is a crime and whether, or when, to involve the police. Wildlife and animal crime takes many forms from hare coursing, trade in endangered species, persecution of protected species to livestock worrying. Find out what is a crime and what you can do about it.

What is a wildlife crime?

- Poaching.
- Coursing.
- Persecution of badgers, birds and bats.
- Egg theft and collection.
- Collection of or trade in protected species and animal products.
- Not registering animals which require a licence.
- Taking protected plants.
- Use of poisons, snares or explosives to kill or injure animals.
- Animal cruelty.
- Hunting with dogs.
- Introducing invasive species.
- Killing or capturing, damaging or destroying the habitat of any protected animal.

Report it:

- If you think a wildlife crime is being committed then contact the police by [reporting a crime online](#).
- If a crime is happening or someone is in danger, [call 999](#). If you have a hearing or speech impairment, use the textphone service 18000 or text on 999 if you've pre-registered with the [emergencySMS service](#).
- The police would rather you contacted them and they investigate, than not hear from you.
- You can also report wildlife crime anonymously to Crimestoppers, by [calling 0800 555 111](#).

Road traffic incidents involving animals:

- If you hit a dog, horse, cow, pig, goat, sheep or donkey (or a mule) then you must report that to the police, whether the animal is killed or not.
- If you hit a wild animal accidentally and you can't take it to a vet immediately or safely, you need to contact the police on [101](#), as allowing a wild animal to suffer is an offence. If you have a hearing or speech impairment, use the textphone service on 18001 101.
- Hitting a wild animal deliberately is an offence under the [Wild Mammals \(Protection\) Act](#).
- If you hit and kill a wild animal, you must leave it safely by the roadside and notify the local council so they can remove the remains. Some wild animals are protected and it is an offence to possess one, dead or alive.
- If you come across animals loose on the road and there's a danger to traffic, [call 999](#). If you have a hearing or speech impairment, use the textphone service 18000 or text on 999 if you've pre-registered with the [emergencySMS service](#).

Other crimes involving animals:

- The police work with the RSPCA to investigate animal cruelty. To report cruelty, neglect or abuse, you can go to the [RSPCA's website](#) or call them on [0300 1234 999](#) (lines open 24 hours a day).
- Livestock worrying and theft are offences and must be reported to the police. You can do that by [reporting a crime online](#).

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- Incidents involving dogs, either a dog that's out of control in a public place, a breed of dog that's been banned or dog fighting, must be reported to the police [online](#).

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How Safe is London for Visitors?

or.. How Dangerous is London?

- London is a very safe city. However, just like any capital, crime does exist and it's always best to take extra caution and be prepared when you come to town.
- The majority of crime in London is opportunistic so as long as you don't appear to be a target – you will likely not become one!
- When violent crime does occur, it usually takes place in neighbourhoods that tourists wouldn't visit.

Is it Safe to Visit?

- Yes! As far as large cities go, London is incredibly safe. During the day, the most common crime in London is pickpocketing - like most other European capitals.
- At night, most areas in the centre of town are well-lit and public transport runs 24 hours a day to get you home safely.
- You will notice a police presence in London and the Met police force are friendly, helpful, and approachable in general.
- Women traveling alone are also safer in London than in many other world capitals.

Safety Tips in London:

Travel:

- Never accept rides on bicycle pedicabs.
- Keep to well-lit main roads when walking at night.
- If you are travelling alone on a bus at night – sit downstairs.
- It seems obvious but take care when crossing the street – we drive on the left here!
- Do not wear headphones when travelling alone as this will prevent you from being aware of your surroundings.
- Plan your journeys ahead of time, if possible. Know where you are going and which stop you will need. (Check www.tfl.gov.uk to plan your trips!)
- Only use registered minicabs or black cabs – **never** get into an unmarked or unregistered vehicle and never accept a journey from a driver off the street. Only black cabs are allowed to pick up travellers on the street.
- Solo travellers should definitely consider exploring the city with a tour group! We have a wide variety of tours that explore many of London's various neighbourhoods - and all in a controlled and safe environment. See what's on when you visit [HERE](#).

Belongings:

- Do not tuck your phone into your back pocket!
- Keep things like money, wallets, phones, etc. out of sight.
- Keep your wallet close to your body, and valuables on your person when possible.
- Never leave your bags unattended anywhere in London – this can lead to security alerts.
- Don't stand on the edge of the pavement and use your phone - thieves on mopeds or bicycles can ride past and snatch it from your hands!
- When carrying your bag, tuck it under your arm, or if you have a longer strap, cross it over your chest and one shoulder.
- If a stranger on the street asks you for directions or the time, be extra aware of your belongings while you answer (particularly your phone and wallet).
- Always keep a separate bit of cash somewhere else on you so, even if you are a victim of crime, you will always have enough money to get back to your home/hotel.

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In Bars, Pubs, and Restaurants:

- Don't leave your drink unattended.
- Don't accept drinks from strangers you have not witnessed being made/poured. Keep your property underneath the table or out of sight - many locations have bag clips underneath bars/tables - hang your bags there if you can.

Which Areas of London are Safe?

- As mentioned, most violent crime in London takes place in areas you will likely not visit. The 'safest' areas in town tend to be the ones most visited by tourists, including Canary Wharf, The City of London, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, King's Cross, Knightsbridge, Mayfair, The Southbank, Westminster. Other 'safe' areas but where you should take extra care of your belongings include Camden, Clapham Junction, Covent Garden, Elephant and Castle, Finsbury Park, Hackney, Leicester Square, Shoreditch (only some parts), Waterloo, Wapping and Wimbledon.

Do I Need to Carry a Knife or Pepper Spray in London?

- In some countries, it is common practice for people to carry a knife (this includes Swiss army knives), but many blades are illegal in London. Don't try to play the 'this knife is legal' game.
- Pepper spray is **illegal** in the UK. Having pepper spray on your person subjects you to the same legal punishments as carrying a gun.

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