

KEEP A RECORD OF YOUR PROPERTY

Marking things like jewellery or antiques is difficult and could reduce their value. You should get expert advice in these cases.

You can still protect items that can't be marked by keeping a record of them. A simple and effective way of doing this is to photograph each item, preferably in colour, paying special attention to any distinguishing marks such as initials or crests which you could use to identify the item. Take the photograph against a plain background and include a ruler to give an idea of size.

Use the record form on this leaflet to keep a list of the items you have marked and where the marks are.

Keep your list and any photographs safe at all times. It's a good idea to give a copy to someone you trust for them to look after.



**Don't buy items you think may be stolen.
It's not just an offence, you could be encouraging crime.**

RECORD OF VALUABLE PROPERTY

Item	Serial number	Description including size and colour	Purchase and date	Value £	Where marked

CODED FOR KEEPS

Marking your property puts thieves off and helps to protect it



MARKING YOUR PROPERTY MAKES IT LESS ATTRACTIVE TO THIEVES, HELPING TO PROTECT IT

MARKING YOUR PROPERTY CAN HELP POLICE TO CATCH THE THIEF

HOW SAFE ARE YOUR POSSESSIONS?

Your possessions may mean a lot to you but to a thief they are just another way of making easy cash. If stolen, you may be able to replace your TV, video and hi-fi, but do you own things that would be impossible to replace? These might include items of sentimental value.

Of course the best thing to do is to protect your home against thieves. But if someone did break in and steal things, could you describe what you have lost fully and accurately to the police? It's not as easy as it sounds when all you have to rely on is your memory.

Every year, property worth hundreds of thousands of pounds is recovered by the police and not returned to its rightful owners. This is simply because it can't be properly identified. And if the items can't be identified, the police may not be able to prove that they were stolen. They may then have to give your property back to the thieves and let them go.



Thieves find identifiable property dangerous to handle and difficult to sell on. As a result, you can put them off by marking your property and advertising that you have done so by displaying a 'Coded for keeps' sticker anywhere a burglar might get in, for example on the doors and windows of your home.

POSTCODE YOUR PROPERTY

Your postcode, plus your house or flat number (or the first two letters of your house name), provides a simple and unique way of identifying your property. A person living at 7 West Albion Street, Notown, NT42 9WA, for example, would use NT42 9WA 7. A person living at Crossroads Cottage, High Street, Anytown, AN3 1NZ would use AN3 1NZ CR.

If you don't know your postcode, ask at your local post office or visit www.royalmail.com and click on 'postcode finder'.

HOW TO MARK YOUR PROPERTY

There are several ways to mark your property depending on the type of object you want to mark. You can get easy-to-use property marking kits from stationers and DIY stores.



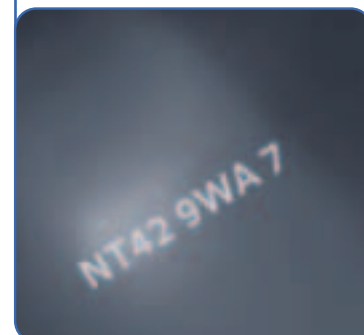
ENGRAVING OR ETCHING

Engraving or etching is suitable for many hard surfaces and can be done using an electric engraving tool or a hand engraver. This method leaves a visible and permanent mark.



ULTRA VIOLET OR 'INVISIBLE' MARKING

An ultra-violet (UV) pen can put an invisible mark on your property, which can only be seen by using a UV lamp. Only use UV marking when other methods would reduce the value of the object. The mark can fade in time, especially when exposed to sunlight, and can be washed off so you need to renew it regularly.



CERAMIC MARKING

Ceramic marking pens have been developed to mark china, glass or any glazed surface. They do not cut or scratch the surface but leave a permanent mark.

PUNCHING

You can mark heavier metal items, such as lawn mowers, with a hammer and a set of punches.

MARKING AND REGISTRATION SERVICES

Instead, you may want to use one of the increasing number of commercial organisations offering property marking and asset registration services.

Neither the Home Office nor the police support or approve any particular commercial product.

ELECTRONICALLY

Some products, like certain TVs, now allow you to record your details electronically. These can only be changed using a security code.



Where you mark your property is important – particularly if you are using the engraving method. If you want the mark to be out of sight, choose somewhere behind or underneath the item. However, don't pick somewhere so hidden that the police would not be able to find it.

Whichever method you use, the mark should be so secure that removing it would damage the property or affect how the item performs.