



SECURED BY DESIGN SECURITY ADVICE GUIDE

Property marking



Property marking is a simple and effective way to protect valuables, making them far less attractive to thieves by both reducing the potential to sell them on and dissuading an offender from its theft by realising that the item can be easily linked to the scene of a crime. It also makes it easier for the police to trace the rightful owner of possessions.

The two types of property marking are overt and covert, with Police Preferred property marking schemes also including a register or a manufacturers' database.



Overt property marking

Property is marked either with a permanent marker, by engraving, by use of tamper evident labels or by use of a chemical etching kit. Property can be marked with a postcode and house name or number. The police preferred way to overtly mark property is by using chemical etching kits and/or tamper resistant labels.



Chemical etching is a safe and effective way to mark metal, aluminium, plastic and glass that may form part of a wide range of products such as televisions, laptops, cameras and digital tablets. Chemical etching kits contain unique stencils that carry the owner's specific details, such as postcodes, house numbers or names together with the chemical etching compound and an application tool. Care must be taken to ensure that the warranty status of the item is not affected by the mark and that the instructions for application are carefully followed.



Tamper resistant labels can be applied to a wide variety of hard surfaces and have a strong adhesive that makes them durable and difficult to remove. The labels can be barcodes, asset numbers or postcodes with house numbers or names that all render the property identifiable and the rightful owner traceable.

Covert property marking

Covert marking can take a number of different forms, from its most basic form such as UV Pens through to Forensic / DNA marking, Chemical marking, Microdots and Property Tagging. Covert property marking is quick to apply and nearly impossible to remove.

There often only needs to be the smallest trace of the marking substance to identify the rightful owner. Covert marking is complemented by placing a tamper resistant label on the property to warn thieves and the authorities that there is a covert mark present.



UV marker pens are fluorescent but transparent and its ink is only visible under an ultra-violet light. It is a simple, fast and inexpensive way to mark property but the mark will fade relatively quickly so should be refreshed regularly to maintain its effectiveness.



Chemical trace liquids (taggants) are invisible to the naked eye when applied but leave long lasting, difficult to remove marks, containing unique forensic identifiers specific to the owner that fluoresce under ultra-violet light.



Microdots contain unique identifying codes that are invisible to the naked eye but can be read under magnification. They can be applied covertly to property with the marks being directly linked to the owner by reference to a secure central property register database.



Electronic Tagging is a term used to describe devices that can be concealed in or on an item such as inside a bike frame, that send electronic messages to a receiver. The electronic message identifies the owner from information held on a secure central property register database.

It is recommended that you always take photos of all valuables, both those which are financially valuable and those which are of sentimental value.

It is recommended that you always seek specialist advice before property marking valuable works of art and antiques to prevent these items from being devalued by the process.

For further advice about any of the security tips listed above, or to find out how to buy police recognised property marking solutions, visit www.securedbydesign.com