



Say 'on your bike' to thieves, says Halifax Home Insurance

With a hotter than average summer predicted, and many people seeking ways to save their waistslines as well as their wallets, more people are likely to be getting on their bikes this summer. Halifax Home Insurance is reminding cyclists to be aware of bike thieves and make sure they don't fall prey to the opportunist cycle thief.

- Bicycle sales have soared in recent months
- Bike theft increased 7% in summer last year
- Average cost of bike theft is now £350 according to Halifax Home Insurance claims data
- Take steps now to protect your bike, says Halifax

Recent reports suggest that cycling is making a huge comeback as bike sales have increased by 50%*. According to research from Which?**, bicycles are among the top things thieves look to steal from sheds, along with tools, furniture, lawnmowers and plant pots.

Senior Claims Manager for Halifax Home Insurance, Martyn Foulds said: "Despite a wetter than average summer, we saw a 7% increase in claims for bike theft during the summer months*** compared to the winter months last year. Many bikes that are stolen are locked up, but often some types of locks such as cables can be cut and are therefore not enough of a deterrent. We anticipate that this year bike thefts may be on the up as warmer weather prevails, people look for ways to economise, and domestic burglary generally increases."

In order to help cyclists protect their bicycles, Halifax Home Insurance offers the following advice:

- Make use of bicycle racks wherever possible and always lock your bike, even if only leaving it for a few minutes

- Park your bike in well lit busy areas where possible
- Keep bicycles indoors and locked when not in use
- Invest in a good lock. Use a hardened D-shape lock as cable locks can be easily cut
- Have your bike marked and registered with a Police security initiative such as www.bikeregister.com
- Keep photographs of your bike and write down the name, model and serial number in case you need to report this to the Police
- Check your home insurance policy and consider additional cover for contents outside the home if you ride your bike regularly.

Martyn Founds says: "If you are unlucky enough to fall prey to bike thieves, it is important to report the incident to the Police as soon as is reasonably possible, as in order to make a successful claim for bicycle theft, insurers need a crime reference number. It's also a good idea to take photographs of the bike, and keep any receipts to prove purchase of both the bike and also any additional accessories such as mudguards, lights and tyres."

Halifax Home Insurance covers all bicycles provided they are listed on the policy schedule****. Customers can choose whether to cover bikes inside the home (which also includes cover for sheds, garages and outbuildings), outside the home only, or both inside and outside the home for complete protection.

According to Halifax's own in-house claims data, the top ten hotspots for bike theft last year were:

Region (Ranked)	Average claim cost
London	£454
Kingston on Thames	£361
Glasgow	£436
Chester/North Wales	£293
Bristol	£409
Manchester	£490
Richmond/Twickenham	£304
Bournemouth	£257
Reading	£368
Hereford	£300

Source: Halifax Home Insurance 2009

Halifax Home Insurance is currently running the Peace of Mind campaign, which delves into what makes us feel safe and secure in the home, and offers tips and advice on protecting the home. For further information visit www.halifax.co.uk/peaceofmind.

Ends

Notes to editors:

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* 50% increase in bicycle sales reported in Daily Mail - see <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1170492/Bike-sales-jump-50-recession-inspires-people-cycle-work.html>

**Which? Research can be found at <http://www.which.co.uk/documents/pdf/garden-theft-153985.pdf>

***Summer months are Apr – Sept inclusive. Winter months are Oct – Mar inclusive for data purposes.

****Subject to specified item limit of £20,000.

New customers who purchase Halifax Home Insurance either in branch or over the phone can benefit from a £50 'Thank You' when they choose Halifax as their home insurance provider, and a further £50 thank you every year at renewal, as long as they remain claim free.

Further details of Halifax Home Insurance products can be found online at www.halifax.co.uk/insurance, by calling 0800 169 8785 or by visiting your local branch.

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