

Irish Security Attitude Index

07 February 2013

New PhoneWatch report reveals Ireland is feeling less secure than it did a year ago

One in five rate burglary in the same league as losing their job

52% of respondents regard having a stranger in the home as burglary's most damaging impact and are taking steps to improve their home and their own security

Ireland is a Nation of Good Neighbours: 7 in 10 reveal they regularly look after neighbours homes and 94% complete of all the tasks asked of them

7th February 2013: A new report from PhoneWatch has revealed that Ireland feels less secure than it did a year ago with as many as four in ten Irish householders admitting they felt significantly concerned. This sense of concern is further reinforced by the finding that when it came to significant life events one in five of those surveyed rated burglary's impact in the same league as losing their job or having enough money to pay monthly bills. The report which measures the security outlook of Irish people and the actions it triggers in the home and the community reveals that the feeling of vulnerability was also found to be indiscriminate as it impacts men and women or those with high and low incomes equally.

43% are doing something about their security

The PhoneWatch Irish Security Attitude Index also reveals this feeling of insecurity triggers a reaction; 43% of those surveyed (or 600,000 homes nationwide) reported doing something about their home security. The report also revealed that even if it is the introduction of a simple security measure, those who took action felt more positive and protected as a result. The heightened feeling of uncertainty has impacted the behaviour of Irish people across the board - eight in ten women admitted they sleep with their mobile phone next to their beds, while one in four men sleep with a hurley under their beds. The report also found that over four in ten homes who already have a security feature have installed another in the last 12 months. Most popular features range from security and internal lights (59%), additional door and window locks (54%), CCTV (36%) and monitored alarms (24%). Irish people also believe that dogs (84%) and community (80%) are as effective deterrents to burglary as leaving the lights or radio on. Plus the report revealed that although more people are now turning the alarm on (49%), only a small number (9%) use it when they are in the house with others and 29% when they are in the home alone. These outcomes are surprising given the personal risks associated with burglary as a crime.

Your neighbourhood network

The report also uncovered that many Irish people use their neighbourhood network to bolster their home security. As a deterrent there appears to be a preference for informal rather than formal community networks - three in ten report being member of Neighbourhood Watch yet almost seven in ten report being asked to watch over a neighbour's home in the last year and the vast majority (94%) reported being not just happy to do so but fulfilled every task asked of them. Looking after neighbours' homes is a reciprocal arrangement: 76% of those asked to look after another's home in turn ask for their own home to be looked after.

Eoin Dunne, Managing Director PhoneWatch says: *"There is no question that Ireland feels more insecure than it did a year ago, recent CSO figures indicate a 7.9% increase¹ year on year in burglary, and this feeling can impact other areas of your life. With the consistent rise in burglaries nationwide year on year, we wanted to get a deeper understanding of the real impact on people's lives and the resultant actions it triggers. What is interesting is the move back to basics and the value people place in their community. We recognise this in our customers too, who feel that being part of an active network of support is hugely reassuring and helps them feel much safer as a result – it's the positive impact of protection powered by people."*

He continued; "The good news is that home security is something you can improve today as shown by the 43% who are taken steps to improve their own security needs. In my experience burglary as a crime is opportunistic in its nature. Small steps can deliver a powerful deterrent to a crime event that has a continuing impact long after the loss of material possessions has been resolved".

The impact of burglary

The impact of burglary is a very personal event. The sense of protecting your home is strongly linked to your sense of private space with 52% indicating having a stranger in your home as opposed to having personal belongings stolen (29%) as the worst part of being burgled. The stranger effect lingers long after the material impact of the burglary has been resolved with 80% of those surveyed revealing that they became much more aware of strangers in their area. It also causes people to become more wary of leaving their home unattended (71%) and to pay closer attention to neighbour's homes (71%). In addition, for all our material prioritisation, it is sentimental items such as family heirlooms and photographs that are really valued as the possessions householders most want to protect (44% of respondents).

Speaking at the launch of the report, former RTE newsreader Anne Doyle commented: *"There is no question that many Irish people are exposed to a growing sense of concern when it comes to protecting their loved ones and homes but it is important to realise that you are not alone in experiencing this. Significantly the report shows a clear co-relation between taking positive action and an improvement in security sentiment. Whether this outcome is triggered by enlisting good neighbours or introducing new security features, a more positive security outlook has got to be a worthwhile thing"*.

PhoneWatch has over twenty years of experience of providing expert protection powered by people – through its 24 hour monitoring, superior service, customer keyholders and the emergency services. Log onto www.phonewatch.ie for simple measures, which will increase your sense of protection today.