How safe are you?
Jane Armitage discusses practice security after her first-hand experience

Earlier this year we had a break in at the Practice. Luckily they only took the charity box, however recently they returned. This time it was rather bizarre.

Our security, I would have thought, was good, but not good enough for anyone with determination. They entered the building by taking a metal frame surrounding the metal shutter, this enabled them to take the shutter off and leave in the car park, so that was rather kind as they could have weighed it in.

They next managed to get through a wood and metal door with three five-lever mortise locks fitted, and entered the building to be met by another door encased in metal. That was no problem to them; this led to the Reception area where they managed to dismantle the intruder alarm and leave in pieces. Although we pay for an alert should the alarm activate, two of the partners were abroad and my mobile battery had depleted, so some use that was.

No money was taken but the intruders walked past several laptops and computers and left them, but what they did take was two diplomas: my diploma in Dental Practice Management was taken off the wall and encrypted. This could have been an identity theft however the police have said not.

Even the surgeries had been affected; one dental unit requires replacement as it appears they may have tripped over the foot pedal and fallen into the bracket table, making it inoperable. A great hand print requires replacement as it appears that the target was aimed at the Manager’s office. Taking the laptop could have brought us to a halt if it hadn’t have been backed up and encrypted. This could have destroyed years of practice management work; the laptop was the hub of the business.

You never think that in a space of 20 minutes an intrusive act of theft could destroy what has taken years to build up.

It has also made us look at our method of contact should the alarm sound again.

One disturbing comment was said to me and the statement was “usually when a crime like this has been committed it happens again a few months later, knowing that the items will have been replaced.”

I urge you all to ensure you have a form of back up and to look at your security level. Things like this were never heard of, but it is the times we live in where nothing is safe and despite how secure you think you are it’s never enough.

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Jane Armitage

About the author

Jane Armitage is an award-winning practice manager and has almost 40 years industry experience. She is currently a practice manager for Thompson & Thomas, and holds a Vocational Assessors award. She is also a BDA Good Practice: Assessor, BDA Good Practice Regional Consultant, and has a BDA Certificate of Merit for services to the profession.