

## Burglars get busy as credit crunch bites

By [Michael Lavery](#)

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Security experts have warned that burglaries and break-ins are on the rise.

Official figures show the number of incidents for most types of crime were down in the last quarter of 2008. But the yearly snapshot was "less encouraging" the Irish Security Industry Association warned.

And it added that there is strong anecdotal evidence that such crimes are on the rise in the wake of the recession.

Despite a 6.7pc fall in the last quarter, the full year's figures for burglary and related offences showed that the number of offences was in fact 1,058 higher, with 72 more aggravated burglaries, the ISIA's magazine, Secureview, said.

Where burglary is concerned, there is anecdotal evidence that suggests the real trend is upwards, it said.

One of Ireland's best known locksmiths, Colin Crothers of Crothers Security, said he had seen burglary increase since October.

It was not just a slight increase, but a "surge" said Mr Crothers, whose company has been in business for 35 years, providing a 24-hour emergency call-out service.

### Short

In October, the emergency rate of call-outs picked up from both businesses and homes.

"At times, we've run short of timber for boarding up," Mr Crothers said. He added the call rate remained higher than usual up to February and there were two types of crime: amateur, opportunist attacks and pre-planned, professional hits. The professionals were more likely to target businesses for stock and computers.

"IT crime is a majority security issue," Mr Crothers said. "You don't just have the value of the items stolen, but the security risk of all the data taken, plus the downtime while the business has to get back on its feet."

Barry Brady, ISIA executive director, said it was widely accepted that recessionary times drive crime upward and this would appear to be borne out by the figures published by the Central Statistics Office.

"There is a real worry that 2009 will see these figures rise even further," he said. "A reduction in security at this time could prove very costly in the long run," he warned.

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