

Press release
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BRITISH HOMES A 'HOTBED' OF SECRETS

Fellowes urges homeowners to shred their confidential information ahead of the Bank Holiday getaway

British homes are a hotbed of secrets and information, according to new research by [Fellowes](#), makers of the world's toughest shredders.

A recent poll* of 2,000 people conducted by the company, revealed the average Brit has more than 50 pieces of confidential documents at home that aren't under lock and key, including passports, drivers licences, bank statements and utility bills.

With [crime**](#) more prevalent in the summer months, the results also revealed over half of Britons (52 per cent) don't factor in destroying personal information before going away, leaving sensitive information on desks, sideboards and by front doors - demonstrating a careless attitude to personal identity safety.

When they do dispose of these documents, one in five people (20 per cent) simply tear up and throw straight in the bin, leaving them wide open to the threat of personal identity fraud if their documents get into the wrong hands.

Darryl Brunt, sales and marketing director for [Fellowes](#), explains: "As the nation gets ready for the August Bank Holiday, households should take all measures to protect themselves and their families from thieves who can steal your belongings, as well as use personal information for their own gain.

"Whilst online fraud is rife, people shouldn't forget about the threat of paper-based fraud, especially during the summer months. We've seen from our research that one in five people are simply tearing sensitive information up, and sometimes even throwing it in the recycling, when they should really be shredding to give themselves and their families the best protection.

"What's more with the huge amount of confidential information left easily accessibly in homes, we're giving would be thieves a jump start in the process of stealing identities. As experts in document safety, Fellowes are urging households to make sure they store sensitive information in a safe place and shred all unwanted bills and papers before they go away or leave the house unattended for a period of time."

The survey also found that aside from confidential financial information, there is also a wealth of personal information lying around in homes within easy reach, with the most popular including old

school reports (44 per cent), old diaries and journals (31 per cent), postcards (27 per cent) and even old love letters (18 per cent).

Top tips and advice from Fellowes on document safety during the summer:

- Keep passports locked away in an electronic safe if you don't need them for travelling
- Don't leave bills lying around – file and store them in a safe place
- Shred unwanted bills, papers and sensitive information – including print outs of travel details or passport copies, when no longer needed, using a cross cut shredder to reduce risk
- Always protect your post. Re-direct mail if you are away for a long period of time, or get a trusted friend or family member to take in your post
- Check all your statements and financial records as soon as they arrive and report any discrepancies straight away. If your regular bills or statements stop being delivered, contact the organisation who issues them immediately

-ENDS-

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Notes to Editors:

*The research was commissioned by office specialist Fellowes and conducted by Atomik Research in August 2014. For this report, qualitative research was carried out among 2000 employed UK adults.

** <http://content.met.police.uk/News/Keep-burglars-locked-out-during-the-summer-holidays/1400025272408/1257246745756>

About Fellowes

[Fellowes](#), Inc. offers an extensive range of products to equip the workspace, including paper shredders, binders, laminators, desktop accessories and record storage solutions.

Founded in 1917 by Harry Fellowes and headquartered in Itasca, Illinois, Fellowes, Inc. employs more than 1,200 people throughout the world and has operations in 15 countries. Visit fellowes.com for more information.