

## Home Security Tips

Every time you read the papers or watch the evening news, you're reminded that crime rates are on the rise. Burglaries are common occurrences, and homeowners need protection.

A home security system provides more than protection to life and property; it brings peace of mind to your family. Recent statistics show that homes without security systems are three times more likely to be burglarized, as compared homes that are equipped with added security.

A simple home security system consists of a control panel, some magnetic switches, motion sensors and an alarm device. These basic systems can be wireless, or they can be hard-wired into your home's electrical system. More advanced alarm systems will include provide added security with video cameras. These systems are connected to a central monitoring unit, where specialized staff are constantly on call to keep a trained eye on your home and property.

The biggest advantage of having a home security system is not to catch burglars, but rather to frighten away potential intruders. If a culprit sees a yard sign or a window decal indicating that you have an active home security system, he or she will pass your property by and target another home. If they proceed with their plan and try to break in to your home, the alarm system will be immediately activated. In either case, your home's security is increased exponentially.

The key elements of a home security system are:

- \* **Control Panel:** This is usually installed in the basement or in a closet. It's the "brains" of the security system, connecting a network of magnetic switches and sensors that are installed throughout your home.
- \* **Keypad:** Located near the main entrance of the house, the keypad looks like the dial pad on a touchtone telephone. It's used to arm the system when you leave home, and disarm it when you return. Look for a keypad that's easy to read, clearly displays the system's status, and can be armed or disarmed with a single touch.
- \* **Magnetic Contacts:** Your doors and windows will have magnetic contacts installed in them. If a window or door is forced open, the contact will be broken and the alarm will be triggered.
- \* **Sensors:** Most home security systems feature passive infrared sensors that can detect body heat or motion. These sensors should only be activated when there are no family members in the home who may accidentally trigger the alarm.
- \* **Alarm sounder:** Some systems use loud sirens and may use flashing lights to signal a break-in. Others include voices that alert intruders that the alarm has been triggered and authorities are on the way.

Don't allow your home or family to fall victim to crime. The crime rate continues to rise and the statistics are staggering. Installing a home security system is a small price to pay for your safety and peace of mind.