

Intruder Alarm Advice for Domestic Properties

Burglars want easy pickings and will avoid effective security. Government statistics have shown that approximately 60% of burglaries on homes fitted with burglar alarms are unsuccessful, suggesting that alarms are a useful deterrent.

Before you buy a security system follow our advice to help you through the technology of intruder alarms.



Domestic

Did You Know

- 80% of burglaries occur when there is nobody at home; most are not planned but committed by opportunists.
- An alarm can be part-set to cover areas that you are not occupying whilst at home.
- Some systems can cope with pets.
- Alarm wiring is already in place in many new houses.
- Wire free alarms are available if you are worried about wiring in your house.
- Systems can include a personal attack alarm, invaluable if there is an intruder in the house – a typical location for one might be in the bedroom.

If you have decided your property would benefit from an alarm system it is advisable to use a reputable alarm company who install to European Standards.

When investing in Security Systems for your home or business it is not advisable to deal with telesales or doorstep callers.

Only speak to installers that offer you a written quotation without obligation. Turn away any company that try and shock you into purchasing with stories of burglaries in your locality. If you feel a particular company has tried 'hard sell' tactics you should consider contacting your local police or trading standards office.

Professional installers will:

- Thoroughly survey your home, assessing the risks and designing a system to your specific needs.
- Installing reliable up-to-date equipment that meets the relevant European Standards.
- Ensure their engineers are thoroughly trained.
- Explain to you fully and clearly how the system works.
- Ensure the alarm continues to work efficiently.
- Ensure that there is no damage or mess to décor and wiring is concealed where possible.

Audible Alarms

These sound a loud siren or bell, scaring the intruder and alerting neighbours and passers by. This type of alarm does not get an automatic police response. For the police to respond some additional information from a person at the scene that a criminal offence is in progress would have to be given.

DIY

DIY kits may provide a cheap alternative. However the Association of Chief Police Officers does not recommend them for the following reasons:

- The alarm system may not be designed to meet the needs and risks of your property.
- Problems with installation, maintenance and reliability may not become clear until a burglary has occurred.

Remote Signalling Alarms

These alarms send a signal to a commercial "Alarm Receiving Centre" (ARC) who alert a keyholder of your choice and, if required, the police. There is an additional cost for this service, also, for police response, the system has to be installed, monitored and maintained in accordance with the ACPO Policy on Police Response to Security Systems.

Guides on Commercially Monitored Remote Signalling Systems and the ACPO policy are available at

www.acpo.police.uk and
www.securedbydesign.com

Alarm Terminology

Detection

Movement Detectors

The most common form of movement detector is a passive infra-red, but ultrasonic and microwave detectors are also used. These devices are usually mounted in the corner of a room and tuned to detect any movement, including animals, within the room. One detector can offer protection to a large room.

A single detector housing may contain more than one movement detector technology, these detectors can be termed "dual detectors" your installer can advise you on the best type of movement detector to use based on the security survey undertaken on your property.

Magnetic Detectors

They activate when the magnetic field between contacts is broken.

Perimeter Devices

These devices can be set whilst people and animals are actually in the protected room or area.

There are a number of types of devices (e.g. break glass and vibration detectors, etc) and your alarm installer can give you further advice.

Alarm Sounders

External Sounders and Bell Box

The bell box should provide protection against weather and unauthorised tampering. Either a bell or a siren-type sounder should be used.

Your alarm bell box will act as a deterrent to many thieves, therefore it should be sited as high as possible to give maximum visibility and make tampering difficult. Systems installed to European Standards will have their own battery back up and self contained bell module and will continue to sound even if the unit is removed from the wall.

Internal Sounders

The internal sounders fitted to most alarm systems will sound when the main system is activated. The level of sound they emit can vary enormously from low level for domestic use, to an ear piercing tone, often used within commercial premises.

The Control Panel

The control panel works from the mains supply and has an auxiliary battery in case of mains failure.

It processes signals from the detectors and operates the sounders. Most have keypads and the operator uses a personal identification number (PIN). This allows a temporary PIN to be given to a neighbour whilst the occupier is on holiday, and changed again on return. Key operated systems are available for those who have difficulty in operating keypads.

Zone

Zones allows for the system to be part set, for example, at night the downstairs zone could be set whilst the rest of the system could be off.

Personal Attack Device

These are operated by a push button to activate the alarm at any time, even if the intruder alarm is switched off. Attack alarms must only be used when the occupier is under personal attack and not for any other purpose.

Useful Contacts

Alarms Administration at your local Police Headquarters or via www.police.uk which gives access to Police Force map and contacts.

www.tradingstandards.gov.uk

Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO)
Tel: 0207 084 8962
www.acpo.police.uk

www.securedbydesign.com
for police security information.