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Category: Additional Home Security Products

Subcategory: Additional Home Security Products

Tip: Detect Water Flooding Before Damage Occurs

If you are installing a new home security system or upgrading an older one, consider adding a sensor that provides early alert to basement flooding. By now, most Americans have read news accounts of Hurricane Katrina victims who did not realize that their standard homeowner's insurance did not cover floods. These folks likely are out of luck to get coverage for water damage from flooding in their homes. Most of us will never know the terror of a catastrophic hurricane. But it is not unusual for homeowners in certain parts of the country to worry about basement flooding after heavy rains or a spring snow-melt. Flood sensors can signal basement flooding at the earliest sign of problems. Flood sensors are wireless devices that are simple to install. They are placed in home basements and detect flooding as it starts. Homeowners can avoid problems by pumping out basements, vacuuming the water, contacting a plumber, or even sandbagging the walls of their house.

Tip: Voice Warning Systems Alert Households to Fire

The most vulnerable members of your family may be the least likely to get out of the house when there is fire. Recent studies show that smoke alarms may fail to awaken children, whose sleeping patterns are deeper than those of adults. But don't conclude that smoke alarms are unnecessary. They are your first warning to fire or smoke danger in the home. Consider instead a vocal recording that is part of your smoke detector system. The vocal warning sounds along with the beeping noise of the smoke alarm. It can be the recorded voice of a parent telling everyone to leave the house immediately because of fire. Initial studies show that sleeping children are more likely to rouse and respond to the familiar sound of a mother or father's voice. The automated warning systems should be part of an overall fire escape plan for your family. If you have not done so already, develop a plan and conduct drills, just like schools and workplaces do. The drills should teach every family member how to respond in a fire emergency and show the best evacuation routes.

Category: Burglary Protection

Subcategory: Burglary Protection

Tip: Burglars Target Homes with Easy Access

Know the mind of your enemy. The adage sounds more like advice for the battlefield than for burglary prevention. But knowing the common motives and goals of burglars

will help you devise a home security plan that keeps you and your family safe. The Burglary Prevention Council reports that burglars fall into three categories: professional, semi-professional and amateur. Most burglaries are committed by amateurs, while professional burglars may be part of organized crime groups that target high-end items -- such as antique paintings or jewels. Here are some tips for protecting your home and property from common burglaries: Consider installing a burglar alarm, whether it's a simple device with a siren or a monitored system. Amateur burglars seek quick and easy targets. They will not try to break into homes if they think they will be caught. Amateurs look for opportunity -- an open window or a door that is ajar. Semi-professional burglars case houses. They may drive back and forth for a week, or bicycle through a neighborhood to pick the "right" house -- a property that seems vulnerable to break-in or forced entry. Burglars don't waste time. Thefts occur in a matter of minutes, so lock your doors and arm your security system, even if you are leaving the house to drive your child to school or run a quick errand.

Category: Burglary Statistics

Subcategory: Burglary Statistics

Tip: Burglar Alarms Protect Family And Finance

Protecting your home with a burglar alarm provides a sense of security and safety for you and the entire family. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, burglary offenses increased by 1.3 percent from 2005 to 2006 (official 2007 crime statistics have not been released). This may not seem like a big number, but it translates to an increase of 29,620 offenses, bringing the country's total to just over 2.1 million. These numbers include both metropolitan and suburban areas, so even if you live in a small town home safety should always be a priority. Of the total offenses reported, 66.2 percent were of residences like apartment buildings and houses. Home burglary does not just pose a threat of financial loss, but of the peace of mind that your family enjoys. You may have homeowner's insurance for decades in case of fire or theft. Even if nothing ever happens you still continue to maintain that insurance so that all your bases are covered. Just because your home has never been broken into does not mean it can't or that you shouldn't take the proper steps to prevent it. There are crime statistics and the safety of your family; both very good reasons to protect your home with a burglar alarm.

Category: Choosing The Right Equipment

Subcategory: Choosing The Right Equipment

Tip: Flood Sensors & Your Home Security System

Flooding can happen before you know it and cause serious damage to your home. If your house or the area you live in is prone to flooding there is an easy way to stay on top of it. Flood sensors can work directly with your home alarm system to notify you of early signs of flooding. This allows you to start taking steps to prevent water damage before it happens. If you are not home the alarm will notify your monitoring service and they can contact and inform you of the potential flood. This gives you the opportunity to get home and stop the problem before it gets out of control. Place the sensors in areas where flooding might occur, like the floor of your basement or near a hot water heater. They can also be placed in the kitchen or bathroom to detect leaks and early signs of water damage to floors and ceilings. This is an issue that most people do not realize their home security equipment can help them with. Many homeowner insurance policies do not automatically include coverage for flood damage. Flooding can cause you just as much in losses as a burglar can, so use a sensor compatible with your alarm system and protect yourself from both.

Category: Choosing the Right Monitoring

Subcategory: Choosing the Right Monitoring

Tip: Internet Connections Used To Monitor Home Security

If security systems are monitored through landline telephone connections, what happens if you don't have one? No problem. For an extra \$5 per month GE home security systems from Protect America offer HomePulse Broadband Monitoring. With this service, your security monitoring is handled through an Internet connection. All you have to do is plug the talking command station into your modem or wireless router. From there it works just like a standard monitoring service, transmitting a signal to the home security company in the event your burglar alarm is triggered. They will then contact you to check the status of the emergency in your home. The major difference is that the signal sent from your command station makes its way to the facility at least four times faster than it would through a landline connection. This makes it a viable alternative for people without landlines or people who want the signal sent to the security company as fast as possible. The HomePulse Broadband Monitoring service requires an upgrade from the standard talking command station, so make sure to let the company know which options you are considering.

Category: Emergency Panic Buttons

Subcategory: Emergency Panic Buttons

Tip: Hidden Touchpad

Protect America's Hidden Touchpad offers the convenience of one-touch arming, along with a security panic button. The device can be mounted on a wall, hidden in a drawer or cabinet, or even placed in your garage. It is ultra-thin, making it easy to mount on a wall or just slide onto a counter top. The size and convenience of the Hidden Touchpad make it a perfect fit for nearly any part of your home. The great thing about a console like this is that you have so many options about where to put it. It can be hidden near doors to your house so that you can hit the panic button if needed when you cannot reach the command station or telephone. The Hidden Touchpad can help you in the event of an attempted home invasion, medical emergency, or in any other situation where one-touch arming or panic buttons might come in handy. You can even place it in a bathroom for the elderly or disabled, providing them with a medical panic button in the event they were to fall in the shower. This is a great piece of equipment to add to your home security system, no matter who you are.

Category: Flood Protection

Subcategory: Flood Protection

Tip: Compare Flood Sensors Before Buying

When you shop for a flood or water sensor, compare the features of different brands. Essential functions can vary, such as the depth of water measured or whether the sensor can be connected to an existing home alarm. Here is a checklist of features to shop for: Reliability and years of maintenance-free service. Go online to check customer ratings for products you are considering. Compatibility. If you already have a home security system, shop for a water or flood sensor that will hook up to your home alarm. If you are unsure, check with the dealer where you bought your alarm system. Either the company will have a compatible product or know where to find one. Effectiveness. Look for a sensor that can detect water overflow or flooding right when it happens. Some sensors use a thin adhesive strip that can detect water under carpets. High level of protection. Some products let you connect several sensors – in the kitchen, basement, laundry room – to one alarm. State-of-the-art alarm. You may want to choose an alarm that will sound for several hours or even days if there is a problem. Convenience. Look for a flood sensor that has easy DIY installation.

Tip: Upgrade Home Security with Flood and Temperature Alerts

When you buy home security, consider a national company that offers brand-name products and warranties. Expect to have your system for years. You want to choose a company that will provide the service and upgrades you need. National companies also are likely to offer the latest innovations and accessories in home security. Services by

home security companies have broadened significantly. Protection is no longer just about hooking up to a burglary alarm. Look for these other product innovations: Flood sensors that use wireless technology to detect leaks and flooding in your home before it becomes a crisis. Medical panic pendants that can be worn around the neck and summon help with a single push of the button. Low-temperature sensors that alert a monitoring facility when your home drops to chilly levels that can burst pipes. Monitored carbon monoxide detectors that notify 24-hour responders when levels are dangerous.

Category: General Home Security Tips

Subcategory: General Home Security Tips

Tip: Insurers May Discount Premiums for Homes with Security

Who knows better about the risks of home ownership than insurance companies? Insurance companies are so confident in the effectiveness of home security systems that they typically discount the cost of coverage after owners or renters install a quality system. Ask your home security system dealer to provide a certificate as proof your new protection package. Expect up to a 10 percent discount for a simple burglar alarm system and deadbolt locks, though discounts vary by insurer. Discounts can rise up to 20 percent if you have a monitored security system. Also ask your insurer about potential discounts for installing smoke detectors and sprinklers. Check with your insurer to make sure you are getting the discounts you currently qualify for and to learn about additional discounts when you add or upgrade a security system.

Tip: Monitored Smoke Alarms Prove Key to Home Security

A comprehensive monitored home security plan should include a smoke alarm. The monitored smoke alarm is not the standard kind you buy in a hardware store. These smoke alarms not only emit a loud noise when activated but also send a signal to the control panel of your home security system. Most monitored smoke alarms allow for one or two short time delays, in case of a false alarm -- such as burning food on a stove. This gives users time to key in a code to disarm the system, or notify the alarm company by phone. In the case of fire, the control panel of your home security system will activate a central alarm that is loud enough to alert occupants and nearby neighbors. The monitoring service automatically is contacted. Many home monitoring services do not try to phone homeowners first for verification of a fire. Time is too critical for saving lives and your home. Instead your local fire department is summoned immediately. Check with the home security company to find out if customers must pay fees for false fire alarms. Some cities and towns also impose fees on homeowners for false home security alarms, because of the cost to dispatch emergency services to your home.

Tip: Prevent Burglaries Before They Happen

Whether you live in a castle or cabin, there is no guarantee you always will be safe. If you worry a lot about personal safety, it may be time to enhance home security and provide the sense of comfort you need. Here are some tips to help you secure your home: The best security is prevention. Make your home unwelcome to intruders. Criminals are opportunists. Studies show they are more likely to bypass your house if there are barriers and risks to gaining entry. Improving outdoor lighting, trimming shrubbery, and owning a dog that barks at disturbances can help. But to be truly safe, consider a monitored home security system that offers oversight of your home 24/7. Monitored security systems are designed to detect the first sign of danger, and take quick action to alert local authorities. Security companies provide customers with signs and stickers to post on windows and at entryways, so would-be intruders know their movements will be noticed and they may be caught.

Tip: Take Precautions at Home When Leaving for Vacation

Protect your home from burglars when you are on vacation by disguising the fact that you are away. Follow these simple steps to securing your personal belongings and keeping your home safe: Put your TV or radio on a timer, so it automatically goes on and off at key times during the day and night. Stop newspaper and mail delivery, so papers and postal items do not pile up on your porch. This is an obvious sign that no one has been home for days. Ask a neighbor to watch your house. Better yet, hire a house sitter -- a trusted student or senior, for example -- to stay at your home and earn some extra cash to keep a watch on things. In the winter, make sure someone shovels the snow from your walkway. Summers, don't let the lawn grow out of control while you're away. Leave an extra car parked in the driveway. Don't leave a recorded message on your phone at home that you are out of town. Your message at work should simply say you are out of the office. Don't close all the blinds and curtains, as if you are not at home. If you have a housekeeper who comes weekly, consider asking him or her to come the week or weeks you are away. The housekeeper's presence is another sign that someone is home.

Category: Glass Break Sensors

Subcategory: Glass Break Sensors

Tip: Charlie Bars Protect Sliding Glass Doors

Sliding doors can be easy for thieves to enter. They can force open the lock with a screw driver or simply lift the door off its tracks. Swing-down aluminum bars called "Charlie bars" offer protection. They have a pin lock to secure them against the back of the sliding door. With a Charlie bar, the only way a burglar can get in is to break the

glass. For optimum security, add a glass break detector, which will activate an alarm the moment the glass is broken.

Tip: Look for Dual Technology in Glass Break Detectors

Look for glass break detectors that "hear" both high and low frequency sounds. Otherwise, you may get a lot of false alarms. The dual technology listens for an object hitting and flexing the glass, followed by the high sound of breaking glass. When it "hears" the two sounds, in that order, the alarm activates. Sometimes alarm companies use single technology because it is cheaper. But a single technology alarm sometimes mistakes other noises for breaking glass, like music playing, lightning strikes, even someone sneezing. Dual technology ends those problems and allows for a much more sensitive device.

Category: Home Automation

Subcategory: Home Automation

Tip: Home Automation

Wireless home automation is a way to eliminate the tedious and repetitive tasks of your day and make life a little more convenient. With the right software and products, you can have things done automatically and save some time to complete more pressing tasks. You can live the commercial where the smell of coffee wakes you up in the morning as your coffee machine turns itself on and starts a fresh pot. Your TV can be set to turn on so your local news, sports or weather greets you in the morning as you start your day. You can set your entire wireless home security system to activate and deactivate itself at certain times each day. In the winter when it gets cold you can program the thermostat to turn on in the morning so it is already nice and warm when you get out of bed. With the right third party home automation software and products, your entire home security system, entertainment center and more can be set to do exactly what you want when you want. Ask your security provider about software/hardware that works with your system.

Tip: Security In A Flash!

Wireless home security systems use extremely loud sirens to alert anyone within ear shot that a house is being broken into. The noise is a great way to scare off intruders, but audio is always complimented by visual aids. Some alarm systems can be programmed so that both interior lamps and outdoor security lights will flash in the event an alarm is triggered. The noise of a siren is one thing, but when you couple that with the flashing lights in the face of a burglar, they are not going to want to stay for very long. The flashing lights will also help you avoid running into a burglar in the dark and

putting yourself or family members in harm's way. If you do see the burglar, do not attempt to stop him or her. Let them go and wait for the police to arrive. This home automation security function may not be available on every system, so ask the alarm company if you are interested. It may require an additional piece of equipment depending on the system you have in place.

Tip: X10 Socket Rocket!

The X10 Socket Rocket is a great home automation product that allows you to control lights remotely from another room or even the other end of the house. Screw the device into any light fixture, screw in a bulb and switch the power on. Then you send the Socket Rocket a code from your wireless home security system's command station and you can control the light fixture from anywhere in the house. This is a great addition to any Protect America security package, especially for people who are elderly or have physical disabilities that make it difficult to walk across a room and manually turn something on. Previous models before the new X10 were much larger, limiting the light fixtures that they could be attached to and drawing too much visual attention to themselves. The latest model is smaller and easy to install. Measuring in at two inches long and one inch in diameter with a 3/8-inch block on one side, the Socket Rocket can work with most light fixtures and not be an eyesore in your house while doing so.

Category: Keeping Kids Safe

Subcategory: Keeping Kids Safe

Tip: Child & Fire Safety

Every child's bedroom should be equipped with smoke and carbon monoxide detectors for fire safety. These devices can work wirelessly with your home security system to alert you of an emergency. While the detectors can also work independently from your security alarm, it is better to have them all integrated. If there is a fire or high levels of carbon monoxide in a child's room the alarm company is immediately notified. This can save a lot of time in case of an emergency. Separate sensors are usually loud enough to get your attention and maybe that of a neighbor's, but the time saved by your monitoring company alerting the local authorities and emergency services may be critical. It can dramatically cut down response time. No matter what, every child's room needs to be monitored and protected, but having those sensors connected to your security alarm is the best and safest option. Ask your alarm company for sensors that will work with your existing system to provide the best child safety.

Tip: Pools & Child Safety Measures

Pools can be a lot of fun but they can also be very dangerous for an unsupervised child.

If you have a pool in your backyard use wireless motion detectors in the surrounding area in case one of the little guys gets away from you. They can alert you if a child is near the pool when they are not supposed to be and help avoid an accident before it happens. Outdoor security cameras near the pool are also a great way of monitoring the area for child safety. Make sure that you do not leave toys like water tubes lying on the ground around the pool either. These can easily go unnoticed and cause children to trip and fall into the pool. Obviously the first priority is to not let children get near the pool without adult supervision, but it is always a good idea to take extra safety precautions when it comes to your children, and home security systems with motion detectors can help do that. If you have a gate around the pool area make sure to keep it locked to ensure child safety at home.

Category: Keeping Windows Secure

Subcategory: Keeping Windows Secure

Tip: Window Sensors

Windows do not always have the highest quality locks, so burglars do not necessarily have to break the glass to get in. Often times they will try and pick or dismantle the lock and open the window without breaking anything. Window sensors are the answer to this problem. Every Protect America home security alarm comes with a number of door and window sensors. The sensors are wireless and can be used in any room in the house. When the alarm system is activated and the window is opened a siren will go off. The monitoring station will be notified immediately of a possible break-in. When deciding on a home security alarm package, count the number of doors and windows in your home. Make sure to get enough to have every entry point in the house secured. Remember to include sensors for upper floors as well as the ground floor. Burglars can climb to higher windows so those are just as important to your home security as the ones on the ground. Forgetting to safeguard these upper floors is not uncommon but does leave you vulnerable.

Category: Know Your Neighbors

Subcategory: Know Your Neighbors

Tip: Suspicious Activity In The Neighborhood

Let other people in your neighborhood know whenever you see a stranger acting suspicious, and ask them to do the same. If there is someone you do not recognize hanging around a house in the area or talking to local children, communicating with your neighbors may prevent a crime. By informing each other of things that seem out of the

ordinary you can help each other to protect the community. Being aware of what goes on around you makes it easier to keep the safety of you and your family a priority. If neighbors are also concerned for the welfare of one another your home security is stronger. Here are a few things to keep in mind. Keep in regular contact with neighbors, and not just the ones next door. Ask them to check in on your children if you are not home and offer to do the same for them. Share any neighborhood concerns you have with them so you can come up with ways to create a safe community for your families.

Category: Motion Sensors

Subcategory: Motion Sensors

Tip: Motion Detectors Work Like Magic

Motion detectors seem to work like magic, "seeing" people in your house without the use of hidden cameras. Three types of motion detectors are used in home security: infrared, ultrasonic and microwave.

Infrared motion detectors, which are the most common, sense body heat.

Motion detectors using ultrasonic waves send out pulses that measure moving objects.

With microwave motion detectors, the microwaves bounce off moving objects.

Ask your home security dealer about dual technology motion detectors, the gold standard of these protection devices. They use a combination of technologies to provide effective detection and fewer false alarms.

Tip: Use Motion Detectors That Ignore Pets

Pets can pose a problem for motion detectors, which sense when someone is walking through the house and trigger an alarm. You can avoid false alarms with sophisticated motion detectors that provide "pet immunity." They ignore any animal that weighs less than 40 pounds. The motion detector also has the ability to detect heat differences between pets and people. If you have a large pet, you can program the size and weight of your animal, so the system will not activate when it walks through the house. You can also place the motion detector in parts of your home -- such as the basement -- where pets are not permitted.

Category: Neighborhood Watch

Subcategory: Neighborhood Watch

Tip: Crime Watch Meetings

An effective neighborhood crime watch has to employ good communication. In order to

have that the members must meet regularly and discuss issues related to their community. Scheduling regular group meetings is the first step. These meetings should be a forum to voice concerns and issues on the minds of your neighbors, but they can also serve other important purposes. They can provide a means of identifying problem areas in the neighborhood, creating watch patrol schedules, and more. They can also be used as seminars on self-defense or other services offered by local law enforcement. If you have a set location for these meetings that's great, but don't worry if you do not.. You can always alternate locations by holding them in different members' homes. This will often make people more comfortable and encourage them to become more involved. Whether you choose to have weekly, bi-weekly or monthly meetings is up to the community. Emergency meetings can be called as needed, and a web site forum can help members communicate in between gatherings. Create a blog or forum online where community members can discuss all kinds of topics related to the community and neighborhood watch tips.

Tip: The Sign Says: Neighborhood Watch!

As new people move into your area it is important to let them know there is a neighborhood crime watch. It is important to make this fact known to criminals as well. By posting signs and fliers throughout the community you can attract new people to join the group and increase visibility. Burglars passing through often keep on moving when they see that such a group exists. Post these neighborhood watch signs and fliers in highly visible areas where both residents and burglars alike can see them. Here are some key places to post them. Church and recreation center bulletin boards Local grocery stores Outside local schools and daycare centers On telephone poles in major town intersections Outside the local Post Office In community shopping centers and restaurants At the local police station Make sure to include helpful information on these signs like emergency phone numbers and contact information. If your watch group has a Web site include the address. Also include upcoming meetings along with time and location so interested parties can attend and get more information.

Category: Outdoor Lighting

Subcategory: Outdoor Lighting

Tip: Lighting Your Pool At Night

Have you ever just wanted to dive into your pool on a hot summer night to cool off? Of course you have, but doing so in the dark can be dangerous. You need to see where you are going and what you are doing. Outdoor security lights are not just about warding off burglars and trespassers. Of paramount concern is your physical safety and avoiding accidents as well. Use your lights outside to illuminate pools, hot tubs and the surrounding areas so you can see clearly and avoid unnecessary injuries. It is easy to

trip on a rock and end up doing a swan dive into a pool. Whether it is the summer and the pool is full or winter and it is empty, that is a serious injury waiting to happen. During times when the pool is empty, place a reflective tarp over it that can be seen clearly in the lights. Proper exterior lighting around pools is always important, especially if you enter the house through your backyard. If you have a gazebo or pool house these need to be lit too. These are good places for a burglar to hide and are important parts of your home security.

Tip: Lights! Camera! Non-Action?!

Lights! Camera! Action! It works in Hollywood and it can work in your front yard. First come the lights. Outdoor security lights eliminate the ability of burglars to creep up to your doors and windows. They are uncomfortable with being so visible and the lights make them stand out like a sore thumb. Set up your lights, whether they are motion-sensitive or not, so that there are no shadows or dark places for someone to hide in as they approach the house. Make sure to place lights above all doorways into the house and on any porches. You want clearly lit and safe doorways leading in and out of your home. Next comes the cameras. If you choose to have outdoor security cameras on your porch covering your yard, make sure they are not impeded by exterior lights. You do not want glare from another source affecting the video, but you do want to illuminate darker areas so the camera can get a clear view. The action part should be called non-action truthfully, because if you follow the above steps along with a good burglar alarm there should be no action. Burglars should simply move on and leave your home alone. No one about to break the law wants to be in the spotlight with a home security camera trained on them. A burglar is never ready for his or her close-up.

Tip: Timers & Motion Detector Lights

Outdoor security lights can work in several different ways with your home security system. They can be turned on manually, set on a timer, or use motion detectors. The recommended choices would be a timer or security motion detectors. With the former, your lights will turn themselves on at the same time every night. As the seasons change and the sun sets at different hours the timer can be adjusted. With this option you never have to worry about turning the lights on yourself. Even if you are not home you know the lights will be on when you get there. Motion detectors can save you a little money with your outdoor lights, turning on only when they are triggered by movement in your yard. The sensitivity and duration can usually be adjusted to fit your desires. The manual option means that you have to remember to turn the lights on every night. The downside to this is that if you are not at home the lights will be off, leaving part of your home security weakened. This also leaves you and your family vulnerable coming home with no lighting in your yard.

Category: Securing Your Home Before Going on Vacation

Subcategory: Securing Your Home Before Going on Vacation

Tip: Get A House-Sitter

Having a friend or relative spend a few days at your house while you are away is a great way of helping to avoid being burglarized. They especially come in handy if you have pets that need to be taken care of or plants that need to be watered. If you choose to have someone stay in your house there are a few things to do before you leave. Make sure that your neighbors and neighborhood watch know that someone else will be staying there. No one wants a trip to be interrupted by a phone call from home because their brother was mistakenly arrested for attempted burglary. Also, take the time to make sure that your house-sitter is familiar with your home security alarm. They should be able to arm and disarm the system and know the password in case the monitoring company has to call. Remind them to arm the security alarm system whenever they leave the house. The last thing is to leave contact numbers where you can be reached. If anything does happen while you are gone your house-sitter should be able to reach you in case of emergency. Make sure to leave as many numbers as possible, including cellular and hotel phones.

Tip: Let Trusted Neighbors Know When You're Away

Everyone deserves a vacation now and then, but no one deserves to return to a home that has been burglarized. So before you board that plane, train or automobile, talk to your neighbors and neighborhood watch. Let them know where you will be and how long you will be gone. Members of the neighborhood watch can do a few extra walkthroughs on your street to make sure there is nothing suspicious going on. Your neighbors can keep an eye out to make sure no one is on your property that should not be. If you do not communicate your plans to someone they may not think it's necessary to keep an eye out for your house. By telling people you trust that you will be away for a while you can have the peace of mind that someone is looking out for your security at home. Whomever you choose to tell, be sure to also add them to your emergency contact list. That way your home's security system company can inform them of any incidents. Having a next-door neighbor or member of the crime watch on your contact list is a great way to help secure your home.

Category: Security Cameras

Subcategory: Security Cameras

Tip: Digital Video Recorders Offer Crystal Clear Playbacks

You can buy high-resolution security cameras to take the best pictures. But unless you have a quality video recorder, the playback may not look great. The new generation of

digital video recorders may be your best choice. They are superior to analog recorders in several ways. DVRs can handle higher resolution videos than analog recorder can. Pair a DVR with a high resolution security camera, and the result is a sharp image on video. DVRs also offer a high frame rate that easily exceeds analog recorders. The higher rate allows for a smooth playback. It ends annoying time delays and time lapses in your video recordings. With DVRs, the quality of videos does not diminish over time. The video recording can be played back over and over without sacrificing the image quality.

Tip: Night Vision Cameras Use Infrared Technology

Night vision cameras are not the stuff of James Bond flicks. They are widely available and can be part of your home security system. With the right night-vision equipment, it is possible to see a person standing 200 yards away on a pitch-dark night. If you suspect an intruder is on your property at night, pick up the phone and dial 911. But if you also want the high-tech excitement of conducting surveillance of your property, buy a night vision camera that uses image-enhancement technology. These high-resolution cameras "see" in the dark by enhancing infrared and visible light. The cameras are computerized but rugged. They usually come with visors that protect the devices in rain or snow. But expect to pay a hefty price for a quality night vision camera. They can cost \$700 or more.

Category: Security Companies

Subcategory: Security Companies

Tip: Choose Monitored Protection 24 Hours a Day

When choosing a home security company, look for one that offers monitored protection 24 hours a day. You and your family will get the immediate support and help of professional responders when there is an emergency at your home. With monitored protection, your house alarm will warn you to danger and the monitoring service also will be signalled automatically. Professional responders will verify the emergency and contact local authorities, including police, fire and rescue officials. When you are not home, the professionals will respond to your home alarm and try to contact you, while dispatching local authorities.

Tip: Demand for Home Security Increases Employment Options

With increasing demand for security systems in businesses and homes, there is greater need by security companies for service professionals. The National Burglar and Fire Alarm Association -- the industry's primary organization for standards and certification --

offers the National Training School. It provides education in electronic life safety, security and systems. It makes sense to explore the educational experience offered by the National Training School, because of its connections to the national member organization and national reputation for standards. Options for training include classroom work or online instruction for selling, monitoring, installing and servicing security systems. The National Training School has provided instruction to 30,000 students since its founding in 1985. Check with the National Training School to learn about courses offered in your community.

Tip: Home Alarms Win Support of Insurance Companies

Major insurance companies encourage clients to invest in house alarms, because they can prevent burglaries. In cases where the alarm does not keep burglars from entering your home, the noise and commotion may cause them to stay a shorter time. Home insurance companies are so sure of the effectiveness of home alarms that they typically will discount coverage for households that install them. Choose a security company that offers customized packages of equipment that can secure all potential points of entry into your home. A single type of security device is unlikely to provide total protection for your home. Look for a company that offers an array of products -- window and door sensors, motion detectors, glass break detectors and monitoring services.

Tip: National Burglary Alarm Association Offers Directory

If you want to locate security companies in your community, check with the National Burglary and Fire Alarm Association. The nonprofit offers a comprehensive, state-by-state listing of home security companies. Companies in the directory are members of the association, which promotes quality, reliability and training in the home security industry. Association members agree to meet bylaws and a code of ethics. To get more detailed information on a home security company, check with your local chapter of the Better Business Bureau chapter.

Category: Security for Renters

Subcategory: Security for Renters

Tip: Apartment Security Can Save Money In Different Ways

Apartment security is not only essential but it is very affordable as well. Home alarm packages vary based on the size of the property and the equipment needed to secure your home. Unless you are wealthy enough to live in a suite in a Las Vegas hotel and casino, your apartment is most likely a little smaller than your average house. This means fewer access points like windows and doors. You do not need outdoor security lighting and motion detectors. It also means that you most likely do not need to secure

access to a garage. Because apartments have less area and points of entry to secure the home alarms needed tend to be less expensive than those used in houses. A system that is monitored 24 hours per day by a monitoring company can also get you a reduced rate on your renters' insurance as well. Contact your insurance provider once your system is installed and see what kind of discount you may be eligible for. Home security systems can save money on insurance and in possible property losses incurred without one.

Tip: Guards Are Not Enough

Living in an apartment building that has security guards can often lull people into thinking they do not need a home security system. If ever there was a time the old adage about not putting all your eggs in one basket applied, this is it. Even the most competent of security guards is still just human. If a burglar manages to get by a guard you are left completely vulnerable without an alarm. While we all want to live in a world where you do not have to lock your doors at night, sometimes your neighbor across the hall is a question mark. Another tenant would not be scrutinized by security guards and it is difficult to get to know and trust every neighbor in the building. Apartment buildings often have several entrances, while individual apartments have far fewer. So even if it is easy to gain access to the building itself, it is also easy to secure your apartment. Home security alarms work just as well in an apartment as they do in houses, and your belongings are just as important. No one ever said their property was expendable because they don't live in a house. Apartment security is just as important. Security guards are like a yard sign. They are there for visibility. But a sign does you no good if there is nothing to back it up, and the same applies for security guards.

Category: Security Systems

Subcategory: Security Systems

Tip: Alarm Systems Come with Pagers, Panic Buttons

When shopping for a burglar alarm, you will find most systems have similar standard features: motion detectors, sirens and sensors. But some systems offer additional features that add protection and convenience without driving up the price. You may want to check out some of these state-of-the-art features when shopping for a new alarm system: One-touch activation that lets you arm the system by pushing a single button. Pagers that will contact you when the system is not turned on or off as scheduled. For example, if your housekeeper does not arrive at a scheduled time and disarm the system, you will be paged. Additional user codes. Give your baby sitter, pet sitter and house cleaner their own code to access the house. You can delete a code when you no longer need it. Emergency button that lets you summon immediate help 24 hours a day. Self-testing that allows the control panel to alert you if the system has

malfunctioned. Battery backup that keeps the system running if there is a power failure. Chime that lets you know if someone opens the front or back door, when the system is turned off.

Tip: Keep Garage Secure with an Automatic Opener

Garages are common targets for thieves. It's easy to see why. They may not be connected to a burglar alarm system, or have any security. Garage doors often are left open. Manual ones are easy to open. They hold a lot of expensive stuff that is portable and easy to carry away, including bicycles and power tools. Garages also are unattended a lot. Most often they are not used at night, except to park a vehicle. It's vital to secure your garage. You do not want to be surprised by an intruder hiding in your garage. You do not want to give a burglar access to the rest of your house through an attached garage. You also need to protect the things stored in your garage. Add up the cost of the items inside -- your lawn mower, snow blower, tools, bicycles, sports equipment -- and it easily may top \$5,000 or \$10,000. Here are some tips for keeping your garage safe: Use an automatic garage door opener. It's harder for thieves to force open the door. Automatic garage door openers use a touch pad or a handheld button, so make sure you pick a combination that is not simple to figure out. Check the condition of the garage door itself. Look for weak or damaged spots, and loose panels. Don't leave the garage door open. It takes seconds for a thief to pedal off with your bicycle, or grab some tools and run.

Tip: Security Systems Part of New Home Construction

Security systems have not been a standard part of new home construction. But that is changing. Builders are discovering that home security installation is inexpensive and attracts buyers. Along with dishwashers and central air conditioning, home security is a desirable feature in mid-priced homes. Home security systems have been around for generations, but they were not a routine part of new home construction. Costs were too high for hardwiring systems, which required specialized technicians. But the new generation of wireless systems are affordable and convenient. Financing plans enable consumers to pay for monthly monitoring of their home security, after they move in. The builder does not have to assume the costs. Security systems impress new home buyers. They are still unusual enough in new homes, that builders can try promoting the feature as a marketing tool. It makes their homes distinctive.

Category: Wireless Home Security Systems

Subcategory: Wireless Home Security Systems

Tip: Home Security Keypads Put You in Control

A keypad on your wireless home security system puts you in control. Some are mounted on walls while others are portable. Keypads enable you to turn the alarm on and off. They also may let you arm different zones in your home, or summon emergency personnel. Check out are some of the features available, depending on the model and brand you buy: Easy access for arming and disarming motion detectors. Some keypads provide one-touch ability to turn motion sensors on or off. Here's a quick tip: The best time to activate motion sensors are when you are not home, or at night downstairs when everyone in the house is upstairs sleeping. Activate the alarm with the touch of a button. This feature enables you to trigger the burglar alarm or siren while at home, if an intruder tries to enter the house. Use the keypad to test whether your system is working, program new functions, or check the status of your alarm system. Some systems offer easy-to-read, one-touch keypads for summoning local police, firefighters or EMTs. Some keypads let you add other users on your home security system, such as the babysitter or housekeeper. But you give them access, and can change or delete their security codes as needed. Some keypads feature voice response to let you know how your system is functioning.

Tip: Security Systems Do Not Automatically Call 911

Whether you buy a wireless or hardwired home security system, you need to understand that neither system calls 911 direct. A simple burglar alarm will sound a noise loud enough for occupants and neighbors to hear. Monitored systems send a signal to a 24-hour service that typically will first try to verify an alarm, then call local authorities if necessary. In cases where the monitoring service gets a signal of a home fire, it will immediately contact your local fire department without trying to contact you or anyone else on your emergency contact list. Some systems also come with panic buttons that occupants can use in their home, in an emergency. When they push the button, professional responders at the monitoring service will immediately contact local authorities without trying to contact you first. But there is no direct link between your home security system and 911.

Tip: Wireless Security Offers an Array of Products

Think "wireless" when shopping for new home security. Wireless security is not only more affordable and convenient, it also allows for a greater array of easy-to-use products that are reliable. Check out this shopping list of wireless products that consumers can choose from to create or customize a wireless security package that meets their family's needs for whole-home protection. Window and door sensors. Glass break detectors. Security cameras. Receivers and transmitters. Driveway alarms. Medical alerts. Motion detectors. Smoke alarms. Temperature alarms. Flood alarms. Door chime. Nanny cam.

Tip: Wireless Security Sends Alerts Via Cell Phones, PCs

Look for wireless security systems that you can control using the latest communication technology – blackberries, PDAs, cell phones. These systems report alarms and non-emergency events – such as system functions and power failure -- via phone, e-mail and text-message, depending on your preferences. Some newer systems also let you monitor and control parts of your security system through a user-friendly Web portal. You can log onto a portal through your PDA or blackberry. Alarm signals are still routed from your monitoring service to police and fire departments.

Tip: Wireless Security Systems Make Sense for Renters

Installing a home security system in an apartment was not practical until now. Landlords did not want renters to hard-wire burglar alarms, which required drilling into walls. Renters did not want to invest in a home security system they would have to leave behind when they moved. Wireless home security systems end those concerns. Look for easy-to-install wireless systems that require only a strong adhesive to stick to doorways and windows. When you move, you can take the entire alarm system with you to a new apartment.

Category: Yard Maintenance & Landscaping

Subcategory: Yard Maintenance & Landscaping

Tip: Gates and Fencing For Security

If your yard is surrounded by a gate or fence you want to make sure they are kept closed and locked. An open gate serves no purpose. If you have children this is a good way to keep them safe by stopping them from wandering out of the yard without an adult. These enclosures also act as a good deterrent and compliment your alarm system. A fence that requires a burglar to climb or spend time unlocking is the first barrier they encounter. Don't let them through it easily. Often enough that extra time to unlock or climb will discourage a would-be thief. Fences and gates are big parts of outdoor security systems. Planting bushes behind them is helpful, too. Always keep them in good repair. This does not mean you have to make your house into a fortress and booby-trap your lawn. You're not defending the Alamo or securing Alcatraz. Consult your wireless security provider on how to use you landscaping in conjunction with the system you have purchased. Remember though, gates are not sufficient by themselves. Even if you live in a gated community, there are ways through these. That is why you should have an alarm system installed. When a burglar has to jump through hoop after hoop it is much more likely they will quit and call it a day.

Tip: Maintaining Security Outside And Inside The House

Protecting the inside of your house starts with maintaining the outside. Just like taking

proper care of your yard to eliminate hiding places for burglars, keeping the exterior of your house in good shape is essential to house security. A house with faded paint and splintered wood around doorframes and windows appears vulnerable. This gives the impression that the house is not cared for and may be easier to break into. Observed weakness in entry points like doors and windows makes your home more enticing to burglars. Never leave a broken or damaged entry point boarded up or covered with a sheet of plastic or tarp. The longer you do this the more glaring the vulnerability is. Home repairs can sometimes be costly, however they will be much cheaper and safer than having your home burglarized. Take care of repairs immediately, reinforce doors and windows, and keep up regularly with the paint or siding on your house. If it looks like you care enough to maintain the exterior, criminals will think about what type of wireless security you are willing to install to protect the interior as well.

Tip: Yard Security Signs

The best way to make burglars think twice before trying to break into your home is to install an alarm system. Once the wireless security is installed, let them know you mean business. Most packages include yard security signs that clearly tell passersby your home is protected and monitored. Place the sign in a prominent area where it is easily noticeable. Out of sight is out of mind and you want burglars to see the signs and know they should move on. Protect America now offers a great add-on that increases visibility and security at night. The Solar Yard Sign Light attaches very easily to your sign. This weatherproof device turns on at night using solar powered, rechargeable batteries. The LED illuminates your yard security sign for up to eight hours, making the sign visible to intruders day and night. This is especially helpful if you do not have outdoor security lights or the lighting you do have casts a shadow on the sign. The batteries recharge using solar power during the day, getting ready for nighttime on their own. No hassle and a lot of help. Now a burglar can see that you have a Protect America wireless security system as clear as day ... at night.