

## HOMEOWNER TIP

Plan for security:

- Check your home for common sense security (see our checklist)
- Inform your family about the steps you have taken for security in your home
- Talk with your family about what to do if vandalism or burglary occurs or is suspected
- Have emergency numbers programmed in your cell phone and handy at all phones
- Do not confront an intruder; retreat and call for professional help
- When in doubt about any activity around your home, inform your local police department

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## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Call our local office or visit our Web site at:

[www.criterium-engineers.com](http://www.criterium-engineers.com)

## HOME SECURITY

Feeling safe at home is important. While some crime statistics are declining, media coverage of acts of violence and vandalism increases our concerns about the safety of our families and ourselves. Busy families with chaotic schedules add to the concern as one may be returning home alone, late at night.

### If you want to increase the security of your home, what can you do?

First, there are basically two actions to consider:

- practical, common sense actions and improvements
- the installation of electronic security devices

This issue of YOUR HOME is intended to provide an overview of home security. In addition, if you visit our Web site, at [www.criteriumhomeinspection.com/articles1.html](http://www.criteriumhomeinspection.com/articles1.html), you will find a Home Security Checklist you can download and use to check the general safety and security of your home.

Here are some practical, **common sense** security considerations:

1. **Create activity** – Use automatic timers for lights inside and motion detector lighting outside. Some timers have a random on/off time and battery backup in case of power outages. Make it look like your house is occupied day and night. Attach audio equipment to these timers.
2. **Check your home regularly** – Leave a key with a trusted friend or neighbor so they can check your home regularly, at least every other day. Check your insurance policy: it may require regular checks of your home while you are away to maintain your coverage.
3. **Create that lived-in look** – For lengthy trips away from home, have a neighbor park a car in your driveway, keep your front door clear of newspapers, bring in your mail, mow your lawn and remove snow.

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## COMMON SENSE SECURITY

4. **Control access** – Trim shrubs and trees that are close to your house to eliminate areas to hide.
5. **Keep your home securely locked.**
  - Ensure all windows, all doors and all garage doors are locked.
  - Disconnect power to automatic garage doors when you are away.
  - Check for proper dead bolt, hinge, lock and latch installation to ensure doorways and windows cannot be pried open or screws removed to allow easier forced entry into your home.
  - Change locks on new homes or if your key has been lost.
6. **“Toughen” your home.**
  - Make breaking glass the only option for a criminal. Glass can be hardened, especially in and near doors, with tempered and special break-proof laminates.
  - Use solid steel exterior doors only.
  - Install thru-door viewers to ensure you can see who is at your door before you open it.
  - Consider video surveillance cameras connected to your PC or your PDA.
7. **Secure accessible windows** – Install bars or grille-work in your basement windows and any windows close to the ground (use grilles that can be opened from inside in case of emergency).
8. **Control your garage door opener** – Don’t leave your garage door opener in your car. Someone breaking into your car may find a windfall by gaining access to your house as well via the garage door opener and/or your registration (i.e., your home address).

## ELECTRONIC SECURITY

The security industry has developed many home security products to protect your home and family, alert you to what is going on in your yard and outbuildings, and deter would-be criminals from victimizing your home.

Home security products range greatly in price, from just a few dollars to several thousand. You should research your options and discuss your objectives with credible consultants before making a choice. Here are a few home security products to consider.

### **Magnetic Door Alarms** (*inexpensive, easy to install*)

They can be used on any window or door to alert you when it is opened. Magnetic door alarms work on virtually any style of door, including glass doors and sliders which are often vulnerable and hard to protect. These devices will not only alert you when someone is trying to come into your home but also when a child attempts to go out.

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These companies have locations across the country and can help you with your family's protection needs. To find out how these experts can create a security system for your home, please visit their Web sites.

**ADT** – [www.adt.com](http://www.adt.com)

**APX Alarm Security Solutions** –  
[www.apxalarm.com](http://www.apxalarm.com)

**ASG Security** – [www.asgsecurity.com](http://www.asgsecurity.com)

**BRINKS Home Security** –  
[www.brinks.com](http://www.brinks.com)

**DEVCON Security Systems Corp.** –  
[www.devcon-security.com](http://www.devcon-security.com)

**DIEBOLD** – [www.diebold.com](http://www.diebold.com)

**First Alert Professional Security Systems** –  
[www.firstalertprofessional.com](http://www.firstalertprofessional.com)

**GE** – [www.ProtectAmerica.com](http://www.ProtectAmerica.com)

**HONEYWELL** – [hpsweb.honeywell.com/Cultures/en-US/Services/IndustrialSecurity/default.htm](http://hpsweb.honeywell.com/Cultures/en-US/Services/IndustrialSecurity/default.htm)

**Monitronics** – [www.monitronics.com](http://www.monitronics.com)

**Protection One** –  
[www.protectionone.com](http://www.protectionone.com)

**Security Network America** –  
[www.securitynetworkofamerica.com](http://www.securitynetworkofamerica.com)

**Vector Security** –  
[www.vectorsecurity.com](http://www.vectorsecurity.com)

*In Canada:*

**ADT** – [www.adt.ca](http://www.adt.ca)

**First Alert Professional Security Systems** –  
[www.firstalertprofessional.com](http://www.firstalertprofessional.com)

**HONEYWELL** – [hpsweb.honeywell.com/Cultures/en-US/Services/IndustrialSecurity/default.htm](http://hpsweb.honeywell.com/Cultures/en-US/Services/IndustrialSecurity/default.htm)

**Protectron** – [www.protectron.com](http://www.protectron.com)

### **Breakage Alarms** (*inexpensive, easy to install*)

Breakage alarms are home security devices that alert you to window breakage. When an intruder tries to break the window, the vibrations in the glass trigger the alarm, alerting you to danger and scaring away the criminal.

### **Doorstop Alarms** (*inexpensive, easy to install*)

These home security products look much the same as any other doorstop. Doorstop alarms are wedged behind and beneath the bottom of a closed door. When someone tries to open the door or force his or her way in, a high-volume alarm will sound. These alarms often come with an additional feature: a motion sensor that can alert you if someone tries to pick up or move the alarm.

### **Door and Window Jammers** (*inexpensive, easy to install*)

Door and window jammers come in a variety of forms and “jam” something from opening. A door jammer may be a long rod made of an unbreakable heavy-duty metal designed to be propped under a door handle or in the track behind a closed sliding glass door. Other kinds of jammers are brackets made to be screwed into window frames to prevent the window from being opened more than a few inches. Check your favorite hardware store for various jammers.

### **Motion Detector Devices** (*moderately priced, professional installation*)

Motion detector devices are inconspicuous, yet can alert you to the presence of people and animals before they get to your front door. Motion detectors vary in range and coverage; some can alert you only when a person passes directly in front of the security device, while others will be activated by any motion in a room or area of your yard or garage.

Some motion detector alarms can be installed inside the home to sense motion outside the walls. Utilizing radar technology (much the same as what law enforcement uses), the system can sense when someone comes within a certain distance of your home (multiple settings for personalizing distance alerts are often featured).

### **Volumetric Alarms** (*moderately priced, simple to use*)

Volumetric alarms sense changes in the air pressure of a room or on a given floor of your home. When a door or window is opened, the air pressure changes and an alarm will sound. Use volumetric devices to tell you when unexpected visitors enter, spouses or children come in, or youngsters are heading out without your knowledge. Like the doorstop alarm, volumetric devices work anywhere, so they are good safety devices for travelers; they are compact and easily taken with you.

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## SURVEILLANCE

Sometimes all it takes to stop a potential home invasion is the perception that the criminal will be caught. Security system signs and stickers and false security cameras are all part of a dummy system of home surveillance and protection. For a small amount of money, you can buy very real-looking home protection and surveillance equipment that looks just like the real thing. False cables and flashing LED lights make fake cameras look functional, encouraging potential invaders to move elsewhere. Few invaders will stop to make sure security devices are the real thing.

### **Camera Surveillance** (*moderately priced, professional installation*)

Of course, installing a very real functional camera is a great way to protect your home and family. The cost of cameras has declined significantly. Using a camera and your laptop, you can monitor activity in and around your home and yard whether you are there or not. Cameras often come with remote control options to film on demand, when detecting motion or changes in the filmed area (like when a camera is activated when something moves into the picture frame). Surveillance devices can alert you to potential crime problems even before they become real threats, such as filming suspicious persons that may be frequenting your neighborhood or the area around your home prior to an actual break-in.

## CENTRAL ALARM SYSTEMS

These systems have become quite sophisticated and relatively inexpensive. They can incorporate many of the other devices discussed here and include the ability to call you and/or a remote security monitoring company who, in turn, can call the police.

These are just a few of the most popular and easy to use home protection devices for home security. Home security is something everyone should consider, whether you live in a large, crowded city with many witnesses or in a small, quiet town with few or none. Prevention and awareness are key, and a few simple, inexpensive and easy-to-use home security products can make all the difference.

For more information, visit [www.nsa.org](http://www.nsa.org) (National Security Association), [www.nasco.org](http://www.nasco.org) (National Association of Security Companies) or [www.siaonline.org](http://www.siaonline.org) (Security Industry Association).

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