



Fire,
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"QUALITY AND PEACE OF MIND SINCE 1969"

(410) 766-8336

THE ADVISOR

*A Quarterly Security Guide Especially
Prepared for the Clients and Friends of A.A.S.C.O.*

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Things Your Friendly Neighborhood Burglar WON'T Tell You ...

- You're right, I do look familiar ... I was here just a few days ago delivering your new sofa, cleaning your gutters, or, shampooing your carpets.

- Thanks for letting me use your phone while I was there. Love the fresh-cut flowers. That tells me you've got good taste ... and probably nice things inside.

- Those yard toys your children leave outside always make me wonder what type of gaming system you have inside.

- Yes, I really do look for a couple of days worth of newspapers at the front door. But, it's just as easy to put a pizza flyer at your front door and see how long it is before you remove it.

- Winter snow is my favorite. A driveway with

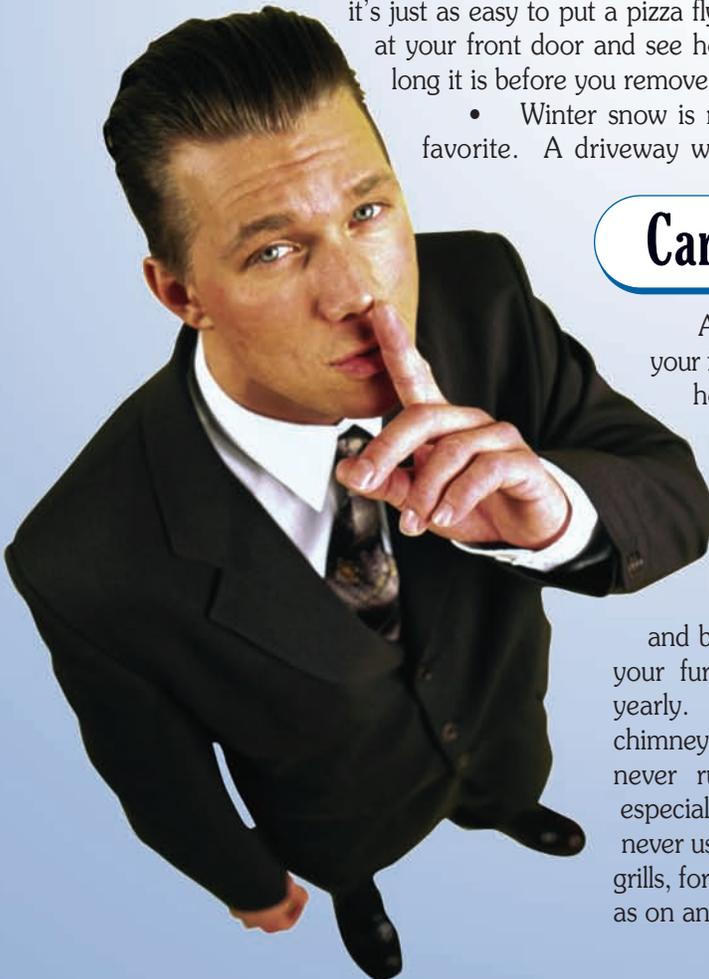
"virgin" drifts are a dead giveaway. It wouldn't be so easy if you asked a neighbor to make car and foot tracks into the house whenever you're away.

- Does your front door have a decorative glass panel with an unobstructed view inside? Be sure to insist that your alarm company install the control pad where I can see if it's "armed" or not ... that makes my work much easier.

- Do you really think I won't look in your "undies" drawer ... and every other drawer in your dresser ... and your bedside tables ... and your medicine cabinet? The only place I hardly ever go into are the kids' rooms.

- Please understand, I'm not complaining ... but why would you pay all that money for a state-of-the-art alarm system ... and then, leave your house without setting it?

- Oh yes, what are the two things I hate most: loud dogs and nosy neighbors. ❖



Carbon Monoxide Safety

As cooler weather approaches, now is the time to protect yourself and your family against the potential danger of carbon monoxide poisoning in your home.

These days, smoke alarms are virtually standard equipment in every home, but anyone concerned with total home safety may be wise to also consider another kind of detector—one for carbon monoxide, with a limited life of five years.

In addition to detection, your first and best line of defense should be to have your furnace and heating systems checked yearly. When needed, have your flues and chimneys cleaned professionally. And finally, never run a vehicle in a closed garage, especially if it's attached to your home—and never use other fuel-burning devices (charcoal grills, for instance) in unventilated places—such as on an enclosed patio. ❖

What's Inside:

- ◆ Carjacking Facts
- ◆ Neighbors Helping Neighbors
- ◆ Home Invasion – The Ultimate Terror
- ◆ Is Your Home's Address Clearly Visible?



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Carjacking Facts

According to the experts, here are the common-thread statistics on carjackings: Most occur in the early evening hours, between 8:00 pm and 11:00 pm. Nearly half occur on weekends: Friday, Saturday and Sunday. What makes carjacking exceptionally dangerous is that an estimated 90 percent of them involve handguns.

The most common locations for carjackings are: parking lots, followed by city streets, residential driveways, car dealerships and lastly, gas stations. Here are some things the experts recommend to help increase your security:

- Always lock your vehicle's doors, even while you're driving. Never walk off leaving your keys in the vehicle.
- Park only in busy, well-lighted areas. Keep any valuables out of sight.
- Whenever possible, drive in the center lane on city streets. This reduces your chances of becoming a victim of a "bump-and-run" incident. This technique, used frequently by carjackers, involves bumping into the rear end of your vehicle. When you stop and get out to investigate any damage, the thieves forcibly take control of your car.

As with any crime against property, all of the experts agree: *DO NOT RESIST* if you find yourself in a carjacking incident. Let them have the vehicle and try to notice and remember as many details as possible for the police. ❖



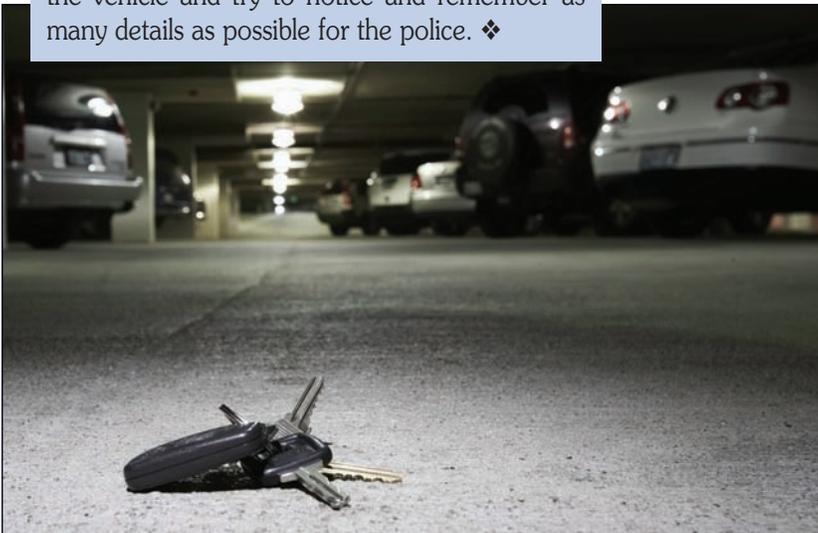
NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

Some communities call them Block Watch programs, others call them Neighborhood Watch programs. In all communities where neighbors keep a watchful eye on the comings and goings of strangers, crime decreases.

You don't have to live deep in the heart of the inner city. You don't have to erect mini-billboards projecting a watchful eye. You don't have to get a major resolution passed by the board of your homeowners' or tenants' association to bring the benefits of neighborhood vigilance to your block. What does it take? Quite simply, the commitment of a few individuals to get the ball rolling.

In the most effective sense, any block watch effort is simply neighbors helping neighbors by watching out for each other's back—or, back doors—as the case may be. At that point, it becomes an alliance of "us against them," and, according to all of the available statistics, crime watch programs—no matter how informal—definitely deter criminal activity.

If your neighborhood doesn't already have a formal, or informal, agreement between those who live there to pay attention to details, make note of suspicious behavior and the comings and goings of strangers, why not take it upon yourself to begin one. It's as simple as getting everyone to agree to the notion of, "You watch my back and I'll watch yours." You might even be surprised at the stronger sense of community that develops between your community's residents and the peace of mind that comes from safety—and security—in numbers. ❖



Home Invasion – The Ultimate Terror

Home invasions are perhaps the most terrifying of any threat to one's personal security. Your home is the very last place you'd expect to be confronted by a criminal—and yet, it's estimated that between 10 to 15 percent of all home break-ins occur when at least one person is at home. The good news is those percentages are very low. The bad news is no one is ever really prepared to deal with the situation should it happen to them.

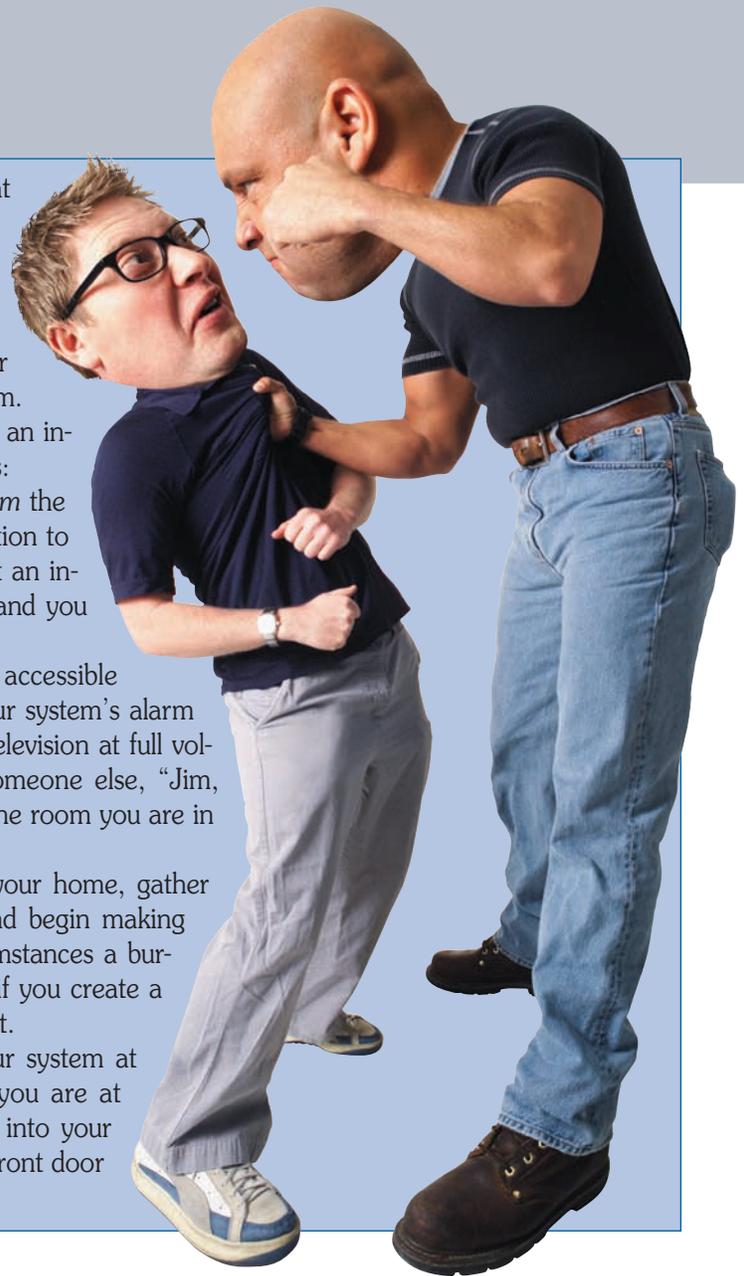
What do the experts recommend you do if you ever suspect an intruder has invaded your home? Here are their recommendations:

- **Escape**—Leave your home via the nearest exit *away from* the suspected intruder's location and go to a neighbor or other location to call the police. Never, under any circumstances, try to confront an intruder. It's unlikely a confrontation will intimidate him or her, and you may place yourself at great physical risk.

- **"Wake The Dead"**—If you're upstairs, with no easily accessible way of escape, and you hear an intruder downstairs, set off your system's alarm (if it's equipped with an audible signal), turn on a radio or the television at full volume, holler at the top of your lungs as if you're talking to someone else, "Jim, there's someone downstairs!" Then, barricade the doorway to the room you are in with the heaviest piece of furniture you're able to move.

- **Gather Your Family Together**—If you aren't alone in your home, gather everyone together in one room. Then, barricade the door and begin making enough noise to frighten off the intruder. Under normal circumstances a burglar doesn't want a confrontation any more than you do. So, if you create a racket upstairs, he or she is most likely to escape without incident.

As always, your best line of defense is to always arm your system at night and keep all of your doors and windows locked when you are at home alone during the day. Finally, never let strangers come into your home without seeing proper identification before opening your front door to them. ❖



Is Your Home's Address Clearly Visible?

In the event of a fire, burglary or other emergency, minutes are precious and few. You absolutely don't want emergency response personnel confused about where you live and how to reach you. To help minimize any doubt and save precious time, the next time you are driving home look for the following:

- **Street signs**—Are all of the street signs leading to your home clearly legible and in good repair? If not, contact your local or state highway and transportation authority and request that repairs be made.
- **Your home**—Is your house number clearly and distinctly visible, either on your curbside mailbox or on the front of your home? It should read like 20/20 printing from the street—both in broad daylight and in the dark of night.
- **Are your yard signs and stickers visible?**

In an emergency situation, you'll want those who are coming to help you to get there fast and find you without hesitation. Do your part by making certain that your house numbers are large, are not blocked from view by overgrown shrubbery, and are made of a reflective material that will show up clearly with your porch light on or in the beam of a searchlight. ❖



Dear Valued Client,

Welcome to our latest safety and security newsletter. With cooler weather coming, you're probably already planning the annual rituals that will secure your home against the elements. May we also suggest that this is the perfect time of year to review and evaluate your home's safety and security status. If you've made any major changes in your lifestyle, or done some remodeling, your home's security system may need to be adjusted accordingly. Please feel free to call us to arrange a no-cost, no-obligation security status evaluation.

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This Is A Test

When was the last time you tested your security system? When was the last time your security system had a complete and thorough check-up? If the answers to these two questions are difficult to recall, then it probably means your system is way overdue for some preventive maintenance.

System testing and inspection are two safeguards that you should initiate on a routine basis to make absolutely certain that your security system is 100 percent at all times. If you already do this, you know the peace of mind it brings.

Like any other complicated system of electrical devices, mechanical anomalies or other normal wear-and-tear problems can develop. Although they are generally easily corrected, they first have to be detected—otherwise, the integrity of your entire system could be compromised.

Some of the more common problems discovered during routine testing and inspection procedures include: cobwebs and dust obstructing the lenses of motion detectors and smoke detectors which can reduce their effectiveness; blown fuses in control panels that prevent horns or sirens from sounding; frozen contacts and worn-out backup batteries. Another common occurrence is when remodeling projects, or simply the rearranging of furniture, totally or partially blocks the field-of-view of motion detectors, diminishing or eliminating the protection they were meant to provide.

So, give yourself, and your family, the maximum level of protection that your system is capable of providing. Perform routine system tests and schedule periodic full system inspections to make certain all critical sensors and alarms are functioning properly. It's the easiest way there is to know that your home's security and safety system is 100 percent if and when it's ever needed. ❖

