



Fire,  
Security,  
Electronic  
Surveillance

"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.*

**Post Office Box 159 • Pasadena, MD 21123-0159 • [www.okaasco.com](http://www.okaasco.com)**

## Thinking About A New Home? Don't Forget to Factor In Security

If you're considering buying a home, a larger home, or a more conveniently located home, there are some important considerations to factor into your search.

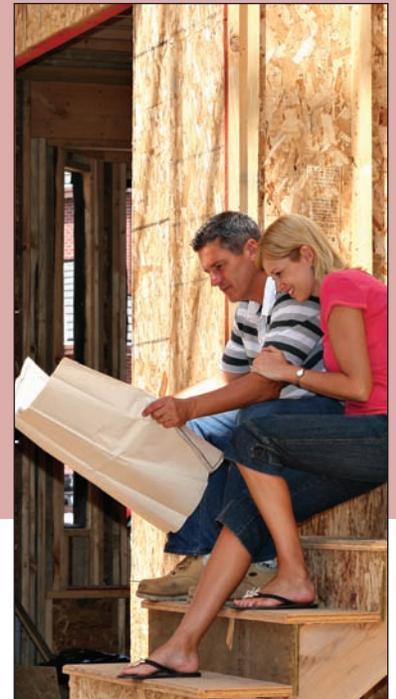
One of the first things to investigate is the crime rate in the neighborhood that you might be interested in moving into. Next, you should investigate the local law enforcement and emergency response services. What is their level of professionalism? Do the local and/or regional law enforcement departments in the area have active crime prevention units? Are they supported by the local community? What is the average response time of the local law enforcement agency, the local fire department, and the local emergency medical services providers? Is there a fully-equipped, state-of-the-art hospital in the immediate vicinity? Are these local and regional departments, agencies and service providers understaffed? And, do they have up-to-date equipment?

Once you think you've decided on a good location, be sure to make safety and crime resistance characteristics part of your home-inspection checklist. Begin at the curb and work your way into the residence—first thinking like an emergency services provider, then like a criminal.

Is the house easy to find? Does it have large, easy-to-read house numbers clearly visible from the street so that emergency personnel can find it quickly? Is the landscaping maintained so that it allows good visibility all around the house and does not provide hiding places for criminals?

Next, are all exterior doors solidly constructed and equipped with security-rated dead bolts? Are any sliding doors and all ground-level windows protected with security-rated locks? Lastly, is the home equipped with a security-fire-personal safety system?

If not, and you decide it's the home you really want, be sure to call us before you move in. If it's within our service area, we can install a state-of-the-art system as soon as you take possession to protect you, your family and your valuables right from day one. ❖



## Fire Preparedness—Consider Your Pets

We're all aware of the things necessary to protect our families from fire. Smoke detectors in all the right places. Fresh batteries in each detector once a year. Flammable liquids properly stored in safe places. Fireplace chimneys cleaned once a year. Furnaces inspected and cleaned each fall. An emergency escape plan that the whole family rehearses twice a year. Everything is as ready as it can get! But, what about your pets?

While most dogs or cats will try to find the nearest exit should a fire break out, they depend on you to prevent and prepare for such emergencies. Simply



by paying attention to where your pets usually sleep, or hang out at various times of the day, will give you a better chance of finding them, or at least making sure they're not trapped, in an emergency. If you have a dog, train it to obey your commands. Include it in your fire drill rehearsals. This way, it will follow your instructions better should an emergency occur.

A fire in your home would affect every life within it. With careful pre-planning for an emergency, and remembering to include your pets, you can go a long way to protecting your entire "family" from the danger of fire. ❖

### What's Inside:

- ◆ Be Prepared For Weather-Related Disasters
- ◆ Some Things To Watch For
- ◆ Criminals Target The Countryside, Too!
- ◆ Protecting Your Privacy



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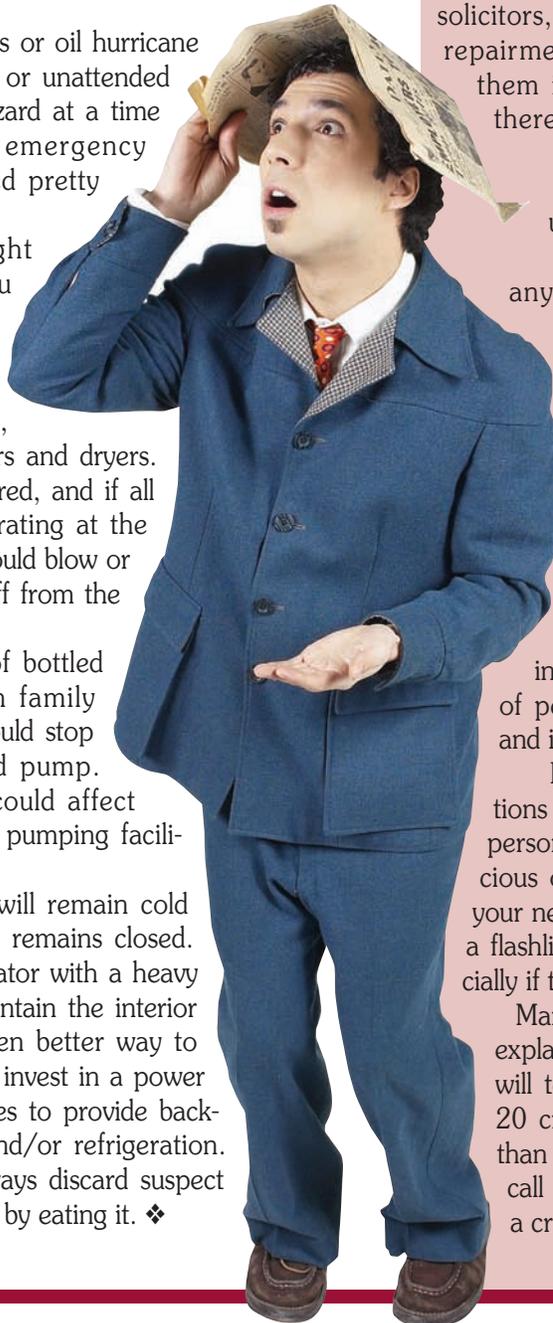
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## BE PREPARED FOR *Weather-Related* DISASTERS

*BE PREPARED* ... very prepared ... surely applies to everyone of us when it comes to the weather. Here are some emergency preparedness tips to keep in mind:

- Keep a battery-powered radio, flashlights and plenty of fresh batteries on hand where you can find them in the dark.
- Avoid relying on candles or oil hurricane lamps. If they are mishandled or unattended they represent a severe fire hazard at a time when all public safety and emergency resources are already stretched pretty thin.
- Keep a radio or light plugged-in and turned-on so you can tell when power is restored.
- Disconnect appliances such as air conditioners, refrigerators, freezers, computers, heat pumps, televisions, washers and dryers. When electricity service is restored, and if all of these appliances begin operating at the same time, your home's fuses could blow or the circuit breakers could trip off from the sudden energy demand.
- Keep several gallons of bottled water in your home for each family member. Your water supply could stop if your home uses a well and pump. Additionally, power outages could affect municipal water treatment and pumping facilities.
- A fully loaded freezer will remain cold for 36 to 48 hours if the door remains closed. Covering the freezer or refrigerator with a heavy blanket or quilt will help to maintain the interior temperature. However, an even better way to maintain your food supply is to invest in a power generator for use in emergencies to provide back-up power for heating, lights and/or refrigeration. Remember, when in doubt, always discard suspect food rather than risk getting sick by eating it. ❖



## SOME THINGS TO WATCH FOR

Not every stranger in your neighborhood is going to be a criminal. There are many legitimate tradespeople, repair and service technicians who do have legitimate business around our neighborhoods. Just remember, criminals take advantage of this by often assuming the guise of a legitimate business representative.

Always ask for and carefully check the identification of all solicitors, meter readers, and repairmen prior to allowing them into your home. If there is ever any doubt, lock your door and call the business or utility for verification.

Be suspicious of anyone going door-to-door in your neighborhood. Watch them carefully and if you notice that they try the door to see if it is locked, look into windows, or go into alleyways or backyards, report it to the police immediately.

Be suspicious of anyone casually walking through the neighborhood looking into vehicles, backyards, etc. Be suspicious of people carrying property at unusual hours and in unusual places.

Be suspicious of apparent business transactions conducted from a vehicle. Be suspicious of persons being forced into a vehicle. Be suspicious of any abandoned vehicle that appears in your neighborhood. And, be suspicious if you see a flashlight beam inside a neighbor's home, especially if they are away.

Many of these situations could have innocent explanations. But any law enforcement officer will tell you he or she would rather investigate 20 crime-prone situations that prove harmless than be called to one when it's too late. Your call could save a life, prevent an injury, or stop a criminal act. ❖





If you live in the country, it doesn't mean you can let your guard down. Statistics indicate that residents of rural communities have a unique brand of crime problems. These range from house burglaries to the theft of crops, livestock and machinery. Though incidents may happen less frequently than in the city, those who find themselves victimized are no less traumatized. Here are some things to help reduce your risk of rural crime:

- *Lock things up.* Make sure the outside doors in your home and outbuildings are solid wood or metal and have deadbolt locks. Then, use the locks! Keep small equipment items, like mowers, tractor attachments and snowmobiles, locked in a barn or garage.

- *Light things up.* Burglars hate bright lights. Install outside lights that keep your house, driveway, barns and other buildings well-lit. Use timers that automatically turn on outside lights at night.

- *Make your mark.* Marking your equipment with a permanent identification number can help reduce theft. Tattooing livestock is better than ear-tags because tattoos can't be removed easily.

- *Account for all keys.* Don't leave keys in vehicles or farm equipment. Always lock your vehicles when they're not in use. Don't hang keys on hooks inside outbuildings. Create a *master keyboard* where all keys are kept inside your home and always make sure that every set is accounted for.

Crime prevention in rural areas isn't much different than in the city. When you're out and about, you can keep an eye on your neighbors' homes, livestock and equipment—and they can do the same for you. ❖

## PROTECTING YOUR PRIVACY

Consider for a moment the scope of private, personal information accessible to virtually any clever, computer literate person with an Internet connection and you'll begin to understand why it is expedient to minimize your vulnerability.

- *Plastic-trails.* Every time you hand a retail or grocery store clerk your bank debit card, credit card, or savings club card, you are leaving a detailed account of your buying habits that may be sold to other marketers.

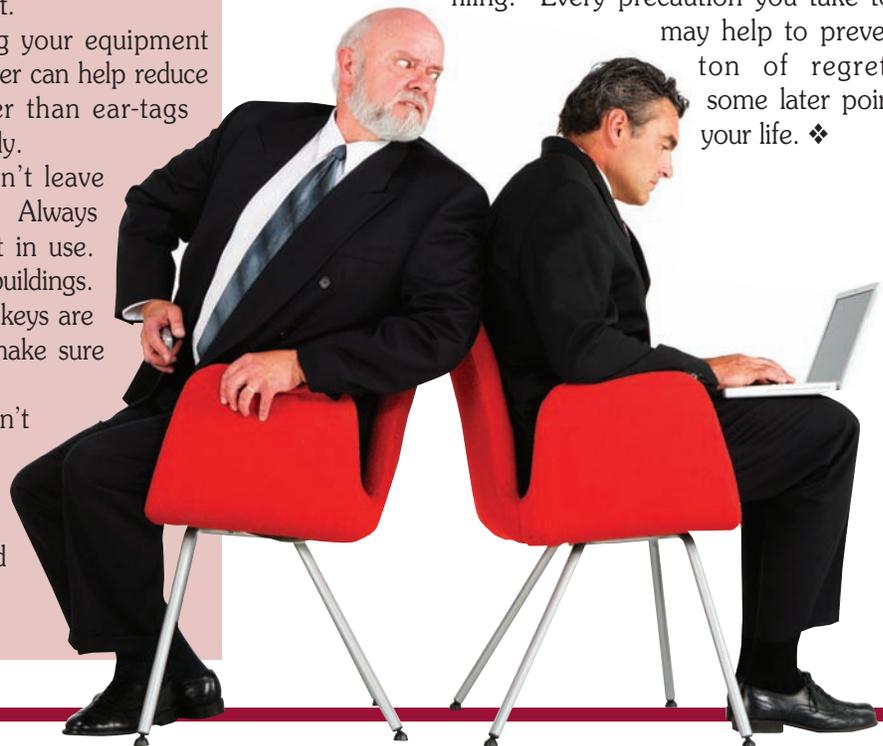
- *Just say, "No!"* In order to track sales and marketing demographics, many retailers have gotten into the habit of asking all customers for their phone numbers, or other personal information, at the checkout counter. Remember, you have every right to refuse to divulge personal information, no matter how insistent the clerk may be.

- *Use the tools to protect yourself.* To block potential telephone, pager, and cellular intruders, request security codes (either a number or a password) for your accounts and do not reveal them to anyone.

- Whenever you fill out any application or questionnaire, always look for a checkbox which states that you do not want any of the information on the application to be disclosed to a third-party. If there isn't a specific area to indicate your desire for confidentiality, write it boldly on the application, initial it and date it.

Preserving your privacy, and protecting your identity and accumulated assets, has taken on a new urgency since the onset of the age of instantaneous electronic profiling. Every precaution you take today

may help to prevent a ton of regret at some later point in your life. ❖



Dear Valued Customer,

Welcome to our spring newsletter. With warmer weather just around the corner, we'd like to suggest that this is a good time of the year to evaluate your home's safety and security status. As leisure activities shift into high gear, often resulting in more time spent away from home. It's the perfect opportunity to review your security and energy management details.

**A NOTE TO OUR ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY CLIENTS:**

To adhere to the alarm registration procedure, obtain a form please visit their website at [www.aacounty.org/police](http://www.aacounty.org/police). It is extremely important that when you receive your registration number that you call and give it to Ronnie (410) 766-8336 x21.

Please join me in congratulating Ronnie Koch for being named the Northern Anne Arundel County Chamber of Commerce's 2010 Citizen of the Year for her dedication to the economically disadvantaged children in Anne Arundel County.

Sincerely,

# Get The Latest Security Advantage For Your Security System With Back-up Cellular Monitoring

Please call for details

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## PET AVOIDANCE SENSORS CAN HELP REDUCE FALSE ALARMS

While you may think of your Golden-Lab, Shih Tzu, or big and lovable, mixed-breed "pound-puppy" as just one of the family, he or she will appear to be an "intruder" to many motion sensors. This causes the system to initiate an alarm call—which, of course, turns out to be a false alarm—because the "intruder" is merely your "big-brown-eyed-pal" who's sitting in the corner wondering what all the excitement is about. Quite often, families with large pets stop arming their systems to avoid false alarms.

Today there is a whole new breed of sensor technology that is pet smart. These modern sensors incorporate sophisticated signal analysis, ASICs (application specific integrated chips), and specially designed lenses. This allows these new-generation units to avoid small, horizontal targets while still reacting to large vertical thermal sources that enter the sensor's field of view.

Properly installed in areas where your pet is free to roam, sensors using a combination

of advanced signal processing, pulse count technology, and/or dual or pet sensitive lenses can help to eliminate false alarms caused by a pet. No technology is entirely fool-proof—pets that enter the sensor's field of view at close range, or take a vertical path through the sensor's field of view by climbing may still be registered as an intruder. The newest generation of pet avoidance sensors can increase a pet's "invisibility" and mobility within the home while allowing the family to maintain their system's alarm status—and their peace of mind.

If you're hesitant about arming your security system because of false alarms caused by a family pet—or, if you'd like to increase your pet's mobility within the home when your system is armed—we'd be pleased to explain how the latest generation of pet avoidance sensors might accomplish both of these goals. Feel free to contact us for full details and a no-obligation analysis of your home's "pet-sensitive" protection needs. ❖