



Fire,
Security,
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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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PERSONAL SECURITY: HOME INVASIONS



Home invasions are perhaps the most terrifying threat to one's personal security and safety. Your home is the last place you would ever expect to be confronted by a criminal; however, 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 that those percentages are really very low. The bad news is that 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's home 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 well 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, or yell 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 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. ❖

All wireless devices and some smoke detectors have internal batteries. These batteries should be replaced periodically as per the manufacturer's requirements. The rechargeable battery for your security system control panel should be replaced approximately every four years.

SAFETY TIP It is a good idea to have a fire extinguisher in the kitchen as well as by all fireplaces or woodstoves.

What's Inside:

- ◆ Clothes Dryer Fire Warning
- ◆ Be Prepared: Test Your System
- ◆ The Lighter Side of Crime
- ◆ Carry A Wallet? Copy That!
- ◆ Check Your Bank Checks



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CLOTHES DRYER FIRE WARNING

We would like to remind you to clean the clothes dryer filter screen after each load of laundry, to clean the outside exhaust vents twice a year and to occasionally vacuum the motor area of the dryer. The lack of maintenance causes twenty-nine percent of dryer fires annually. Thirty-two percent of dryer fires are caused by worn out parts. In addition to fire safety, regular maintenance and cleaning the exhaust line, vents and screen will help the dryer run more efficiently. If materials such as cooking oil, solvents and other combustible or flammable liquids were not removed completely during the laundry wash cycle, heat from the dryer may cause them to ignite. This is the reason that mop heads should not be put into the dryer. Someone should be at home whenever the dryer is in use and the home should have working smoke detectors.



BE PREPARED: TEST YOUR SYSTEM



One of the most important and critical concerns about your home security system should be: "Is it really working?"

Regularly scheduled testing of your system helps guarantee security and peace of mind for you and your family. It's a simple procedure that should be done once a month—many people choose the day they make their mortgage payment—or some other easy-to-remember date.

Testing your system is important because it helps us protect you. It insures that all system components are functioning properly. It assures you that should the need ever arise, emergency response will be timely and predictable. In short, regular testing helps you make certain you are getting full value and complete protection from your system.

If you already follow the test procedure schedule we outlined when your system was installed, excellent! If, for whatever reason, you are not testing your system's operational integrity regularly, give us a call. We'll be happy to help you set up a system testing procedure that suits your busy schedule and lifestyle. ❖

The Lighter Side of Crime

Reported in Louisiana:

A man walked into a convenience store, put a \$20 bill on the counter and asked the clerk for change. When the clerk opened the cash drawer, the man pulled a gun from his pocket and demanded all of the cash in the register, which the clerk promptly handed over. The man grabbed the cash from the clerk and ran from the store, leaving the \$20 bill on the counter. The total amount taken from the cash register was determined to be \$15—which begs the question: if someone points a gun at you and gives you money, has a crime really been committed?

Reported in Arkansas:

Apparently this guy wanted a drink pretty badly. He decided that he would just throw a cinder block through a liquor store window, grab some booze, and run. So, he lifted the cinder block over his head and heaved it at the window. Unfortunately, the cinder block bounced back off of the window and struck the would-be thief on the head, knocking him unconscious. The liquor store window was made of bullet-proof Plexi-glas™—and to add insult to injury, the whole event was caught on videotape.

Carry a Wallet? Copy That!

We've all heard and read the horror stories about fraud that's committed on unsuspecting individuals using a name, address, Social Security number, credit cards, etc. Well, knowing what to do when your purse or wallet is stolen is one thing. Being prepared to do it is something else. Here's what the experts recommend:

- Use a photocopy machine to record the contents of your wallet. Do both sides of each license, credit card, etc. Keep the photocopies in a safe place where you can find them. You will have a ready reference that details what was in your wallet, what all of the account numbers are—and, the phone numbers you will need to call and report your cards stolen and cancel the accounts.

- Immediately file a police report in the jurisdiction where your wallet was stolen. This proves to credit providers that you were diligent.

- Immediately call the three national credit reporting organizations to place a fraud alert on your name and Social Security number. The numbers are:

Equifax: 1-800-525-6285

Experian (formerly TRW): 1-888-397-3742

Trans Union: 1-800-680-7289. ❖



Few of us give much thought to the information we make public every time we write a personal check. In this day and age of rampant identity theft, there are some things you should consider checking when it comes to your personal banking checks, such as:

- The next time you order new checks, instead of having your full name put on them, have just your first and middle initials and your last name put on them. If someone takes your checkbook, they will not know how you sign your checks—but your bank will know how you sign them.

- If your bank requires that a phone number appear on your checks, always use your work phone number, not your home number.

- If you have a P.O. Box number and a street address, only put the P.O. Box number on your checks. If you don't have a P.O. Box, use your work address.

- NEVER have your Social Security number printed on your checks. If it's absolutely necessary that it appear on some checks, you can write it in yourself. If you have it printed, anyone can get it.

Most of us assume that the people who see our personal checks are honest and trustworthy. And, 99% of them are. But, by exercising a little caution, you can keep the remaining 1% from using your personal bank checks to gain access to your assets. ❖

The Lighter Side of Crime

Reported in Washington—When a man attempted to siphon gasoline from a motor home parked on a Seattle street, he got much more than he had bargained for. Police arrived at the scene to find an ill man curled up next to a motor home near spilled sewage. A police spokesperson said that the man admitted to trying to steal gasoline but plugged his hose into the motor home's sewage tank by mistake. The owner of the vehicle declined to press charges, saying that it was the best laugh he'd ever had.



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

Please call for details
410-766-8336

Dear Valued Customer,

Welcome to our Fall 2012 newsletter. With cooler weather approaching, it is time to secure your home and property from the elements. Take a moment to check your windows and doors. To check your security system, open a window or door with a detection device and check to make sure the ready light goes out on your touchpad. This is a good tip to follow after storms.

As the reliability issues of telephone technology change, we want you to know that there are cellular back up options for your security system. Please give Ronnie a call at (410) 766-8336 ex. 21 for the products available in your area.

TECH TIP: If your yellow "trouble" light comes on, press the [#] key to stop the beeping. If your system was installed before 1999 press the [*] to stop the beeping.

Also, please remember to test your alarm system.

Sincerely,



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Children Home Alone

Whether you're a parent or grandparent, odds are that there are children home alone somewhere in your family circle. The demands of today's two-income, two-career family structure has significantly increased the number of children who, once they are old enough to accept the responsibility, are "on-their-own" at home for some portion of the day. Here are some ways you can help prepare them for the unexpected:

- Make certain that every child in your home knows how to arm and disarm your security system.
- Make certain that every child in your home, even the youngest, understands that dialing 911 is the quickest way to summon help—and that he or she knows the basics of 911 protocol: their name, their address, their phone number and to always stay on the telephone until the 911 dispatcher tells them to hang up the phone.
- Make certain your children know how to contact you, or an alternative adult, in the event of an emergency.
- Make certain your children know that they should not open the front door to strangers or ever allow any stranger to come into the home.
- Make certain that your children understand the dangerous consequences of playing with matches, cigarette lighters, or other fire sources—including the kitchen range—and that they know to leave the house and seek help at a neighbor's home in the event of a fire.
- If you own firearms, make certain that the guns and ammunition are stored separately—and that both are locked up.

Children can be safe and secure on those occasions when you can't be home with them. All it takes is a little instruction to help them know and understand the things they need to do—and not do—when they're home alone. ❖

