



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.*

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



*Winter 2015*

## YOUR BEST DEFENSE

Many would-be criminals will think long and hard before attempting to burglarize your home simply because you have a security system. Window decals and yard signs serve notice to all that your home is not an easy target, which is why 99 percent of the time a burglar's first choice is any potentially lucrative property without a security system.

The fact that you have a system is your first line of defense—but it's not your best defense! Your best line of defense is to use your system: to arm it every time you leave your home, even if it's just to run a few errands. And your second best line of defense is to test your system regularly so that you can be confident it will function properly if and when you need it.

Other defensive measures include keeping an eye on

your neighbors' houses—and asking them to watch yours—it's an excellent way to generate a spirit of "community" while simultaneously discouraging burglars.

When you're away from your home, always make sure it looks and sounds occupied. Turn telephone ringers down, leave some lights on—both inside and outside. Use automatic timers to turn them off and on if you're away on vacation. Turn on a radio slightly louder than you might normally play it—or place it close to the front door so that anyone outside can hear it.

Nearly half of all break-ins are through the front door, so if a would-be intruder believes that your home is occupied—and protected with a security system—he or she will probably look for an easier target elsewhere. ❖



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## CRIME RATES CLIMB AT THE MALL

Crime is on the rise at shopping malls. Enclosed shopping centers have become the modern equivalent of traditional Main Streets. Statistically, the average person goes to a shopping mall over 30 times a year, making over half of all retail purchases there. Seniors "speed-walk" through the grand hallways. And when families go out for supper, they often eat at a mall restaurant or food court.

Despite all of the efforts made by mall management to portray themselves as safe temples of free enterprise, malls are fast becoming the new war zone for criminals. These are the four major crimes that seem to be on the rise at mall complexes:

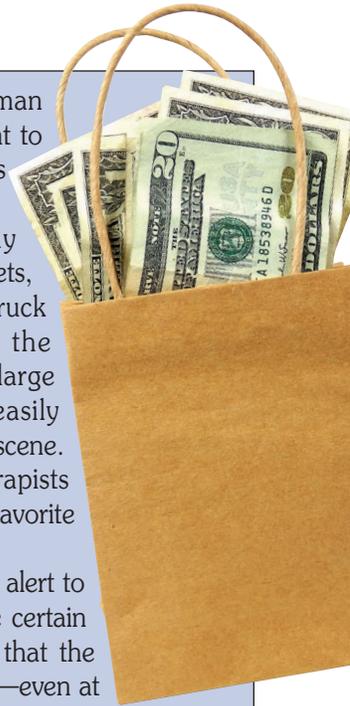
- Muggings—Traditional grab-and-run purse snatchings as well as bolder incidents where thieves will grab an arm-full of clothing from a rack, or an entire countertop jewelry display, and then dash for the nearest exit.
- Carjackings—A shopper who is preoccupied with keeping children out of traffic lanes, while juggling parcels and searching for the car keys, isn't necessarily paying

enough attention to the man or woman who is waiting for just the right moment to forcibly steal his or her wallet, car keys and the vehicle, too.

- Armed Robberies—Not only bank branches located in malls are targets, but so are jewelry stores, armored truck guards carrying money, as well as the money rooms in the mall offices of large department stores. Shoppers can easily become innocent bystanders at a crime scene.

- Sexual Predators—Would-be rapists and child-molesters find malls to be a favorite place to seek victims.

So, always use common sense, stay alert to what's going on around you, and make certain that each family member understands that the "real world" is filled with "real" dangers—even at the mall. ❖



## INTERIOR SECURITY OPTIONS

In many homes, it is impractical to install contact sensors on every door and window. Fortunately, there are a whole range of detection devices specifically designed to help you protect interior spaces—especially in those areas where you may have done some recent remodeling, or if you have active pets.

Commonly used devices for interior

spaces are sound sensors, or glass break detectors, they are designed to recognize the unique sound patterns created by glass being broken. They detect a would-be intruder at the point of attack and send a signal to the main panel that can be programmed to perform a variety of functions, such as turning on lights, sounding an audible alarm, notify-

ing a central monitoring station or law enforcement authorities, etc.

A second group of interior protection devices sense motion. Commonly called Passive Infra-Red (PIR) detectors, these devices create a curtain of protection that will sense the presence of an intruder. They are located in any open space an intruder would cross after entry, such as a stairway, hall, etc. Dual-technology sensors are available that combine PIR and microwave sensors that confirm an intrusion and help prevent false-alarms in homes with active pets. PIR sensors are only armed when no one is at home.

Many advances have been made in the size and functionality of interior security sensors. If you've added a room, or remodeled your living space, we'd be happy to review your current level of protection—and, if warranted, make recommendations for ways to improve your security. ❖



# ARE YOU AN EASY TARGET?

This is the time of year for predators. Consumer complaints and street crime statistics will reach their annual peaks during the next few months. So what should you do? Take care not to let your guard down, particularly when confronted with any of these common scams and rip-offs:

**Curbside Vendors**—Beware of sidewalk street vendors or those hawking their wares from trucks in parking lots. Experts recommend that you save your money! Many times the box may contain broken goods—or, more likely, stolen merchandise.

**Bump-and-Run Thieves**—Beware of any situation where a stranger distracts your attention, such as stumbling into you, insistently asking directions, or otherwise catching your attention. Often street thieves work in pairs. They will create a distraction—even to the point where someone fakes a seizure—and wait for you to stop to lend aid or just watch. Then, they “work the crowd” stealing valuables. Be suspicious of anyone who distracts you.

**Health Club Scams**—What’s one of the most common New Year’s resolutions? *To lose a few pounds and get into shape!* Diet and fitness centers are counting on it. But, don’t let your guilt—or a health club’s high pressure tactics—get the best of you. If the center is new, check with your local business association and governmental consumer protection agencies before signing any contract. Always check it over completely to make sure it lists all the services, options and “escape” clauses that you’ve been promised.

While there’s no certain way to avoid every single con game around, watching out for these common ones—and anything else that sounds too good to be true—can help you from becoming someone else’s easy target. ❖



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. ❖

## SAFETY TIP

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

Is Your Home’s Address Clearly Visible?

Dear Valued Customer,

Welcome to our Winter 2014 -2015 newsletter. With frosty weather approaching, and the threat of winter storms, it is time to secure your home and property from the elements. Take a moment to check that all windows and doors are locked and secure for the winter season.

**TECH TIP:** If you have internet or cable telephone service, be aware that when your cable/internet drops out, your telephone service and security system may be compromised as well. To increase your security communications, please consider cellular back up options for your security system. Please call Ronnie, (410) 766-8336 ex. 21 for the products available in your area.

Also, please remember to test your alarm system.

All of us at AASCO wish you a **HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

Sincerely,

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

Please call for details  
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## IDENTITY THEFT— WAYS TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Despite the perverse nature of identity theft crimes, victims almost always find it difficult to get meaningful help from government agencies. It isn't a violent crime. So, there isn't enough funding available to support dedicated investigative resources to help victims resolve the "horrible turn of events" that have ruined their financial standings and credit ratings.

It's up to you to be proactive in your efforts to protect you and your family from identity theft. Experts include these four tips:

1. Always shred applications for credit cards before tossing them in the trash.
2. Keep accurate records of your credit card purchases and check your bills carefully every month. Report any unfamiliar charge to your credit card company or bank immediately.
3. Never give your date of birth, Social Security number, or mother's maiden name to anyone who CALLS YOU on the telephone—no matter who they claim to be, or what company they claim to represent. Always ask for the company's main business number. Verify it with your phone company's information service. Then call the individual back.
4. Check your credit ratings periodically to look for errors. ❖

