



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)**

## 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. ❖

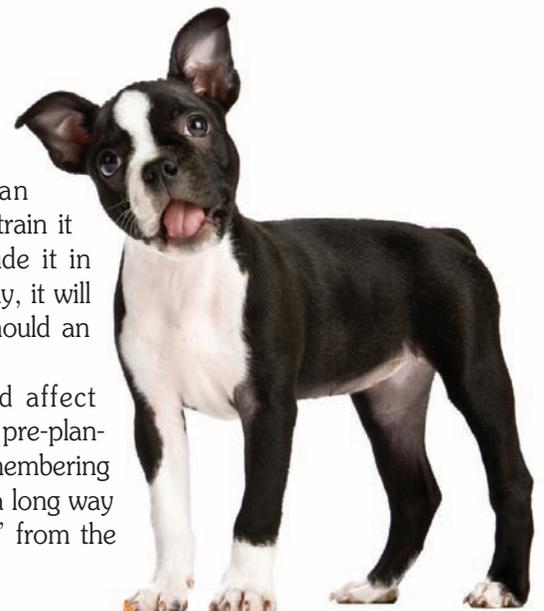
## Fire Preparedness—Consider Your Pets

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. ❖





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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.

## SOME THINGS TO WATCH FOR



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. ❖

## IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

An emergency can be anything from a weather-related event to an interruption of utility company service, from a terrorist attack to a major industrial accident. The most important thing to remember in any emergency—and, we don't mean to suggest it's an easy thing to do—but try to remain calm so you can assess the situation rationally and react safely and appropriately.

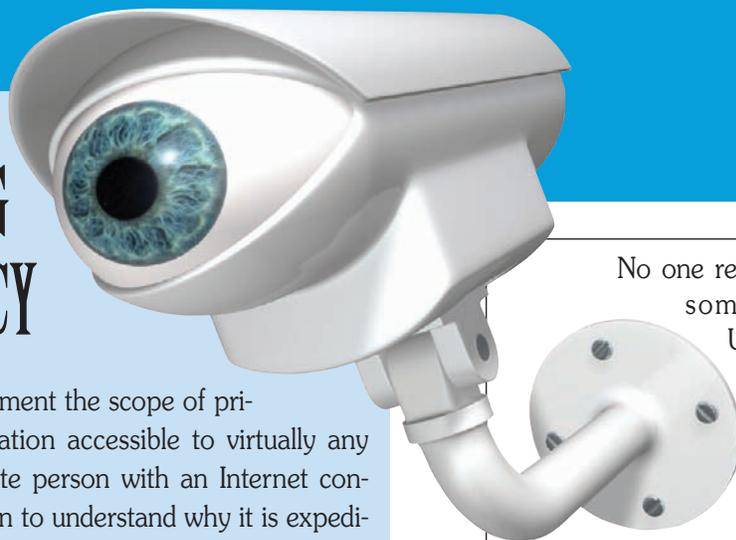
Another important thing to remember is that very often initial news media reports may be overstated, overly dramatized or otherwise grossly inaccurate. All too often, broadcast reporters tend to sacrifice truth and accuracy in their rush to be the first to cover a catastrophic event. It's not that they intentionally *get-it-wrong* on purpose, but their desire for *see-it-now* airtime can result in half-truths and details that are mostly speculative conjecture—all of which can make a situation appear more extreme than it really is. Rumors are an even less believable source of information. Whenever possible, try never to base your decisions or actions on information circulating through unofficial or unsubstantiated sources.

Having said all of that, what can you do to prepare you and your family for major emergencies? First, determine the nature and severity of the situation. Community emergencies can be divided into four types: temporary inconveniences (power is lost but is expected to be restored within "x" hours), major disruptions (train wrecks, multi-vehicle expressway accidents, bridge collapses, plane crashes, plant explosions), regional disasters (usually weather events), or major catastrophes (any event severe enough to bring the whole nation to a standstill—such as 9/11).

To be prepared, you and your family need to discuss and develop detailed "plans" that take into account as many variables as possible. The articles included in this issue should provide enough guidance to help you be prepared for a wide variety of emergency situations. ❖



# 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. ❖



No one really wants to be the target of someone else's obsession. Unfortunately, there's no way to predict who will become the focal point of obsessive-compulsive behavior, but there are ways to recognize the signals of such behavior, such as: A level of persistence that is inappropriate. A disturbing attachment to symbols (momentos, photos, etc.). Behavior that is unpredictably intrusive, violent or abusive. And,

behavior that is inappropriately possessive.

Any or all of these are signals that should not be ignored. They can indicate that you may be dealing with a person capable of becoming a dangerous stalker.

What can you do to protect yourself if you suspect you are being stalked? Here's what the

experts recommend: First, contact local law enforcement authorities and ask for a restraining order. Second, make certain that the harassment allegations are officially noted in police records. Third, keep detailed records of all incidents and tape-record, videotape or photograph encounters. Lastly, inform your family members, friends, neighbors and co-workers not to give out personal information about you to anyone—and, if you're employed, tell building security about your situation and provide them with a photo or description of the individual who is stalking you.

At home, make certain your security system is always armed. Try to vary your daily routine and don't go out walking alone. It's also a good idea to get a second phone line and number—one that is unlisted in any directory and will not be disclosed by the phone company. Keep your original phone number and use an answering machine to screen and record calls. Give your new number only to trusted family and friends. ❖

## I'M WATCHING YOU

Dear Valued Customer,

Welcome to our spring newsletter. With warmer weather arriving, 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 and update or improve your security.

**A note to our Baltimore City clients:**

There is a two call back policy that has been implemented in Baltimore City. Please evaluate your contact list and advise your people that this procedure is in effect. If you wish to make changes to your contact list please fax it to (410) 255-8980, include your name, address, signature, and new information.

**Tech tip:** The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recommends that smoke detectors connected to your alarm system be inspected and tested once a year. Give us a call to get you on the schedule.

**Reminder:** Test your alarm!

Thank you for your business.

Sincerely,

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

Please call for details

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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.
- Turn-off or 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. ❖