



Fire,
Security,
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"QUALITY AND PEACE OF MIND SINCE 1969"

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THE ADVISOR

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

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DOORWAY DEFENSE BASICS



Ask most homeowners what doorway security means to them, and their first response is: strong locks. But, locks are only useful if they are *locked*—and, a large number of burglaries take place after a criminal has gained access through an unlocked door.

No matter how sturdy a lock may be, it doesn't provide maximum protection unless it's installed on a strong door that is mounted in a sturdy frame.

Your next consideration is the type of security sensor installed on your doors. The most commonly used are *contact-sensors*. These devices consist of two pieces, the switch and a small magnet that is embedded in the movable portion of the door. When your alarm system is armed and the two pieces are separated, the electro-magnetic circuit is broken, and a signal is sent to the security system control panel. At that point, either an alarm sounds in your home, or an alarm message is sent to your central monitoring station, or both.

Other important aspects of doorway security include making certain that every exterior door has a peep-hole viewer that provides maximum viewing clarity and adequate exterior lighting so that potential intruders cannot hide in the shadows.

The most important factor to remember about doorway security is never open your doors to strangers until you are confident they are not a threat. Home invasion is one of the fastest growing crime categories, and can represent a real hazard to anyone. ❖

CRIME STATISTICS

Despite the fluctuations in crime statistics in recent years, according to the most recent data available, there's still plenty of criminal activity we should all be concerned about. These are:

- Over 7,500 burglaries every day—that is more than 300 every hour—or, 1 every 8–11 seconds
- 2 out of every 3 burglaries are residential.

- More than half of all burglaries involve forcible entry.
- More than half of them take place during daylight hours.

The lesson to be learned is that at no time can you afford to let your guard down. Arm your system whenever you're away from your home—and at night, because *nighttime* is only slightly safer than during the day. ❖

What's Inside:

- ◆ When the "Culprit" is Man's Best Friend
- ◆ Criminals Hardly Ever Look Like Thugs
- ◆ Does a Burglar See Your Home as an Opportunity?
- ◆ Burglaries on the Rise



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Criminals Hardly Ever Look Like Thugs



WHEN THE "CULPRIT" IS MAN'S BEST FRIEND

There is nothing more frustrating than false alarms triggered by family pets. Fortunately, today there are a variety of motion detectors available with numerous improvements that allow them to detect human-size shapes while recognizing the average-sized family pet as part of the family.

To avoid pet-generated false alarms, today's motion detectors may be equipped with an optional pet lens. This is a blocking device that eliminates three-to-four feet of floor level detection. So, when the family pet goes for a snack in the middle of the night, it passes through the protected area undetected.

Dual-technology sensors are the preferred choice in today's complicated home environment. Dual-technology sensors combine PIR (passive infrared) and microwave technology in one compact unit. Properly installed, positioned and adjusted, they can be used successfully in households with pets that weigh up to about 80 pounds.

These new generation dual-technology sensors include a micro-controller and associated software that can create an accurate picture of a target by using the sensor data provided by the two technologies. The unit then instantaneously compares this picture with a model of a human subject stored in its memory. Even if a human subject is crawling across the floor on all fours, many of today's dual-technology sensors can differentiate between man and animal because of the amount of infrared energy detected.

Even if there are significant areas of your home that are unprotected by motion sensing devices—because the technology that was available when your system was first installed wasn't able to differentiate between man or animal—then you might want to consider upgrading your system to pet-proof motion sensors. We can show you models that provide maximum intrusion protection for your family—while recognizing that your pets aren't culprits, but part of the family. ❖

Robberies, muggings and other violent crimes can happen to anyone, anywhere, at any time.

The fortunate part is that there are ways to protect yourself. The first way, and perhaps most important thing you can do, is arm-yourself with *knowledge*.

Criminals want to prey on "easy" targets. Don't be one! Always look alert and self-confident—walk with a self-confident gait, glance around yourself constantly—don't slouch, shuffle or appear too preoccupied to sense what's going on around you.

If you suspect someone is following you on a crowded street, turn around and face them square in the eye. Often, that's enough to convince him or her that you're not an easy target.

"He (or she) seemed so nice and friendly!" is a comment often heard when a victim describes the person who attacked or robbed them. Remember, it's the criminal's goal to momentarily distract your attention in order to gain the upper hand. To do that, he or she can either use surprise—or kindness.

For example, your arms are loaded with parcels, and a stranger offers to walk you to your vehicle and open the door. You, of course, say, *"No, thank you, I can manage,"* but he or she insists that you need help. This is a clear signal that they are attempting to gain control of the situation and move you away from the main flow of shoppers or pedestrians.

Whenever a stranger becomes assertive, it's time to make a scene and/or move away from that person. Always being on the alert whenever any stranger becomes too nice, too assertive, or too friendly can help you protect yourself from possible criminal intent and personal danger. ❖



Does a Burglar See Your Home as an Opportunity?

Career criminals are rational, decision-making businesspeople. Even the novice criminal goes through a rational thought process when choosing a property to burglarize. Most burglars know exactly where the cash and valuables are kept.

According to studies of residential burglaries conducted by Temple University in Philadelphia, PA, most burglars plan their intrusions based on a calculated decision-making process, even though the burglar may believe he or she is acting at random.

There are predictable signals that attract burglars to specific homes. What are they? A *prime target* is often a recent home buyer (information easily gotten from the local newspaper's real estate transfer notices), who lives in close proximity to a major thoroughfare, on a corner lot, in a middle-income neighborhood, in an older home with an attached garage.

One of the primary factors burglars plan in detail is how quickly they can gain entry and then escape. Homes on corner lots allow burglars to park on side streets where neighbors are less likely to notice. Homes near a busy thoroughfare are chosen so the criminal can easily put distance between himself and the crime scene.

Another primary factor burglars consider in their *criminal-plan* is the potential payoff. As much as we'd all like to believe we are uniquely individual, an experienced burglar can estimate how much he or she will be able to carry away from a given property.

More than 50 percent of burglarized homes are within three blocks of a major thoroughfare. And, 50 percent of burglaries are committed against homeowners who have lived in their homes less than five years. And, of that 50 percent, 32 percent had lived in their homes less than one year.

If the details of this statistical profile seem to fit your life, then you need to be especially vigilant about arming your system whenever you are away from home—and, making certain there aren't any unprotected access points that a burglar could capitalize on. ❖

The activities of burglars and lifetime criminals seem to increase exponentially whenever economic times get hard. That can mean that your house is a potential target for opportunistic criminals. Here are some recommendations to follow to help you keep your family and possessions safe:

- Perform a system test. If you haven't done so recently, contact us to arrange a full capability test of your security system to make certain every component is functioning properly.
- Always arm your system when you leave your home, even if you're just running a short errand.
- Always keep your doors and windows locked.
- Avoid obvious signs of absence. Make your home look occupied when you are away. Use your system's home automation options, to turn lights on and off at normal times, and turn a radio or television on and off.
- Avoid putting empty cartons for high-priced electronics at curbside for trash pickup. Break the cartons down and bag them.
- Avoid discussing your plans regarding money with all but your most trusted friends and relatives.

It's an unfortunate fact that these preparations need to be an integral part of our every day thinking. However, it is much better to make the effort to be prepared for the worst-case scenario, rather than allow a desperate criminal to catch you off-guard. ❖

BURGLARIES ON THE RISE



Dear Valued Customer,
Welcome to our fall newsletter. With cooler weather approaching, it is time to secure your home and businesses against the elements, both natural and criminal. As we settle into our routine we sometimes overlook basic security. Be sure to lock your doors and arm your security system each time you leave your home, and at the end of your business day.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE:

There is a two call back policy being implemented in many municipalities. This means that before we call the police to advise them of an alarm situation in Anne Arundel County and several other jurisdictions we must "make at least 2 attempts to contact a representative" to verify that the alarm is not false. 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 to (410) 255-8980, include your name, address, signature, and new information.

A NOTE TO OUR ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY CLIENTS:

Alarm registration is required. Please register at their website www.aacounty.org/police. Online Forms tab on the left. Then **Alarm Registration Form**. We are required to give your registration number when calling the police. It is extremely important that when you receive your registration number, you call and give it to Ronnie (410) 766-8336 x21.

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Even though our government's national security agencies have the most modern technology in the world, it's still the eyes and ears of our citizens that detect suspicious activity long before it comes to the attention of our nation's security professionals.

According to government guidelines, here are some of the signs that may indicate terrorist activity:

- Anyone who talks about plans to harm citizens in violent attacks or who claims membership in a known terrorist organization that advocates killing innocent people should be reported to the authorities.
- Anyone using, or threatening to use, a gun or bomb to harm, get even, or destroy a person, a group of individuals or an institution should be reported to authorities.
- Anyone threatening to use, a poisonous substance by releasing it into the air, water or food supply should be reported to authorities.
- Any package or a vehicle that

appears to be abandoned in a crowded place—like an office building, airport, school, shopping center, etc.—should be reported to authorities.

- Anyone suspiciously entering or leaving a secured, non-public area of any public transportation facility should be reported to authorities.

- Anyone who is unfamiliar—or behaving suspiciously—and is loitering in a parking lot, around a government building or near a playground should be reported to authorities.

By keeping alert to things going on around you in your community and at the workplace—and knowing how and when to report suspicious activity—can make a difference in the war on terrorism. ❖

