

## Security Systems

No matter how much you practise sensible home or business security precautions, the installation of a home or business security system will add an extra LEVEL of protection to your property.

When you choose a home or business security system make sure it is a system that best suits YOUR OWN requirements. Whether you favour just a burglar alarm; a video surveillance system; a hard-wired or wireless system or a combination, make sure that it matches YOUR OWN real security needs. There is much to choose from!

Why not? Conduct a security review of your entire home or business first. A security review is available from some companies free of charge OR you could carry out a review yourself (see Security Review Checklist document on this website). When complete you can easily consider which parts of your premises or home or business are most at risk. For instance; have you got a public pathway at the side or rear of your property? Is your vehicle safe parked on the driveway? Do you leave your garage door open? The important point is to identify those parts of your home or business and gardens that pose the most risk and then choose the most appropriate system to protect these areas.

Aside from a security system there is also a wide range of additional equipment that works independently from a system. These include window and door alarms, fire and toxic gas detectors, driveway and shed alarms.

However, SERIOUS protection will come from a professionally installed electronic system of one sort or another.

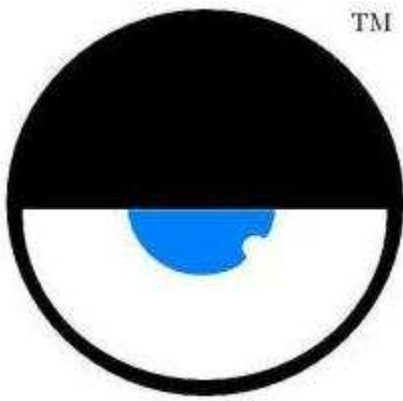
### Alarm Systems

Installing an alarm system in your home or business can reduce the possibility of you becoming a victim of house burglary. The simple visible presence of an alarm can be a sufficient deterrent to prevent your home or business from being targeted for robbery.

An alarm system typically consists of a control panel and a series of motion detectors that are fitted to different parts of your home or business. When you leave the property, the alarm is activated by you keying a password and once the door closes behind you the alarm system is activated. When you return you re-key the password to de-activate the system. Should an intruder enter your home or business in your absence (assuming that you remembered to activate the alarm), a loud - very loud in some cases - audible warning is triggered. The bell or siren – or whatever alarm sounder is used – will normally sound both within and outside the building. This creates the fear of detection by the intruder, as well as creating an uncomfortably loud environment in which to continue his activity.

Some alarm systems are also monitored - see below.

Alarm systems are normally either hard-wired, wireless or sometimes both (hybrid systems).



## **Wireless Home or business Security Systems**

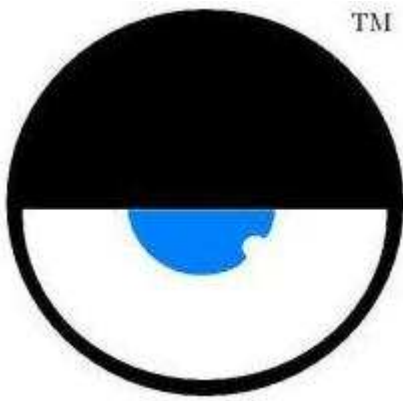
Whatever type of security measures you wish to have in your home or business, wireless security systems are the easiest to install. As the name implies they are wire free, which offers you a much wider choice of peripheral location and also means you will NOT need cables running around you home or business or premises.

The central component of a wireless system - the control panel - still needs to be plugged (hardwired on its own circuit, directly to the main fuse box) into a mains power supply. However, all the other components connect with each other by wireless technology.

The control panel should ideally be located within easy access of the front door - but out of view from the exterior of the property. The control panel can be configured for various components to suit the individual – normal passive infrared sensors, pet immune passive infrared sensors, window and door sensors, multi-function control key fobs (panic alarm), smoke detectors, flood detectors, gas detectors, lighting control and external and internal cameras - the choice is yours.

There are however, a few disadvantage of installing an ALL wireless system. It is possible for a sophisticated burglar to utilise jammer technology – which effectively blocks ALL wireless signals to and from the main control unit – making wireless detectors redundant. Additionally some (DIY) wireless systems are more prone to false alarms - caused from rogue wireless frequencies. Also, unlike wired systems each detector incorporates a battery, which needs to be changed. Due to the fact that the wireless sensors require a battery they tend to be physically larger. However, wireless systems may be a more practical solution for a variety of reasons. One essential issue when considering these types of systems is to remember that a professionally supplied and installed wireless alarm system offers a far more reliable and superior system to one available in DIY stores. Most professional alarm installation companies will offer a maintenance contract or guarantee that means that you system should be operational 24/7.

It also worth considering security systems which offer a combination of wired and wireless technology (hybrid), which give the best of both systems – offering reliability and flexibility.



## **Video Surveillance Security Systems**

There are a number of reasons why video surveillance security systems provide excellent protection. Since the system provides a visual indication they can give you advance warning of for instance a person walking up your drive. They can also provide a recording or a snapshot of an event. Such as an attempted or actual break in. They provide a facility to protect those parts of your property that are vulnerable because they are on your blind side.

Video surveillance security systems are everywhere and have been in use for over a decade. You must have seen them in Shopping centres and malls, precincts and parking lots. These systems are called closed circuit television - or CCTV as it more commonly called. CCTV conventionally consisted of a control room with operators and several monitors connected to various types of cameras. Each camera is operated by a controller and in the event that any suspicion arises, the camera can focus on an individual and record any suspect activity.

Installing CCTV into a home or business was - until recently - prohibitively expensive. However, with the advent of IP (internet protocol) camera technology, prices have tumbled. IP cameras use digital technology, unlike their CCTV cousins which still rely on older analogue technology. This effectively means that video surveillance security is available to suit every body's budget – both business and individual.

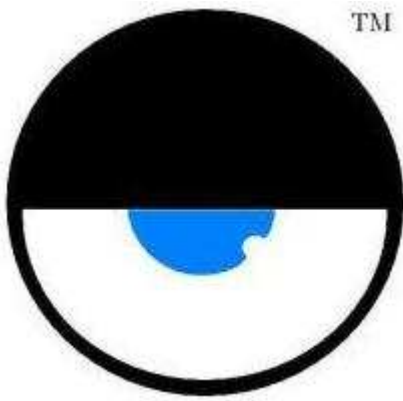
Video surveillance security systems offer a number of advantages over a conventional security alarm system. Intruders targeting a home or business, equipped with video surveillance has to weigh up the possibility of not just detection, but either being caught in the act of a break-in or of being identified after the event – since all criminal activity will be recorded.

Internet based security cameras allow authorized personal to view and listen to remote premises and establish what is actually happening (in real time) from any computer worldwide. This allows the security system owner to visually confirm whether or not a burglary is in progress, before contacting the local enforcement agencies. Some sophisticated systems incorporate an alert system, where-by in the event that a movement occurs in front of a camera, the security system will record the event and send an alert message (through email or the mobile phone network) to the property owner or manager. It is also possible with some systems to talk through a speaker in the remote premises to warn any intruder of the impending arrival of local enforcement agencies – which should scare off even the most determined burglar.

All these features are controlled by the owner from any personal computer which is connected to the internet – wherever they are. This type of system offers a much higher level of security for premises which are left vacant for long periods – since the owner can check any suspicious activity and confirm (through sound and vision) if a burglary is taking place, before taking further action.

Video surveillance systems can be utilised in a number of ways - outside your property – indoors - in a concealed manner. Either way, they can have a strong deterrent effect on would-be intruders and in addition can also be used to manage properties.

In the event you are considering fitting surveillance cameras (especially outside your home or business), be sure to check with local regulations. Professional installation companies should at least adhere to a voluntary code of practice - that helps to protect your home or business and not intrude on other peoples' privacy.



## **Home or business Security Monitoring / Central Monitoring**

Home or business security monitoring or central monitoring, is a service whereby your own home or business security system is connected to an external monitoring network, normally through telephone lines (PSTN) mobile phones (GSM) or the internet. In the event that your security system triggers, a warning is also sent to the monitoring company.

In the event of a system trigger – the Monitoring Company will manage the situation around the clock. Whenever your alarm is activated, the monitoring service will know about it. That's useful, because there could be a time when you are away from home or business and your security system is activated - when you are at work or away on vacation for instance.

Of all the different systems, Security Monitoring is probably the most secure and effective because your house is under constant guard.

Monitoring will only work with a security system that has a special control unit built in or additional control system. This is normally called an auto dialling unit but different systems use different technology. Security systems are then enabled to automatically dial an alert to the Monitoring station in the event of a security trigger - fire, smoke or burglar (depending on your system). The Monitoring Company will then take whatever action has been pre-determined in their service agreement.

If your alarm is triggered they follow it up. Your security system is tracked 24/7/365. Where ever you are. Security monitoring takes a lot of the worry out of dealing with subsequent events in the event of a security trigger.

## **Professionally supplied and installed systems**

Once you have decided to install a security system to your home or business, it is important to obtain further information from local companies. Ideally, written quotations should be supplied by companies that you intend to perform the installation, together with product information to make sure that the system you have chosen is adequate for your needs – both at present and in the future.

Since most professional companies utilise similar quality products, another important aspect of the quotation is the installation itself. Even the best security systems will NOT operate effectively if it is installed incorrectly or may prove problematic in the future (false alarms).

It is also important that the system you choose complies (if required) with current EU directives – this is especially true for business.

British Standard - BS4737 (intruder alarm systems) was replaced in October 2005 by EN50131 the European equivalent and PD6662 (transition edition).

EN50132 CCTV surveillance systems for use in security applications and BS8418:2003 installation and remote monitoring of detector activated CCTV systems and Code of practice.

Please see website for further information on these European directives and British Standards, if required.

Finally it is expedient to request details of the maintenance contracts on offer, which relate to the security system of interest. Quality after sales service and care becomes very important if your system has any teething problems or future problems.