



We all think it can't happen to us until it does – a burglar breaks into our home and makes off with our valuable electronics, art pieces, jewelry, and family heirlooms. It's devastating and no amount of compensation from the insurance company can ease the feeling of personal invasion. Part of our general sense of well being comes from depending on being safe and when that is shattered it can take a long time to recover from the trauma. It's unfortunate to think about the need to install home security systems, but you will be grateful you did it should there be an attempted break in where you live.

The fact that burglars prey on us has caused us to become increasingly aware of the safety of our homes and families. Advancements in home monitoring technology made it possible for more of us to secure our homes. Home security systems can:

- Deter unwanted intruders and burglars
- Prevent surprise confrontations with intruders
- Protect you from losing valuables
- Secure your family
- Protect your property from vandalism
- Alert you to fires and carbon monoxide
- Signal medical emergencies

Our goal is to take away any opportunities a burglar may take to break into your home. Homeowners sometimes hesitate to have home security systems professionally installed because they don't want holes drilled into the walls for wiring. New technology means that the security systems can be put in place with no visible wiring, or in some cases wirelessly. You may have seen security systems circumvented by everything from chewing gum wrappers, external magnets, or someone simply cutting wires...that is Hollywood, not reality.

Home security systems are available for people that dwell in condos and apartments. We can offer portable systems to take with you when you move. These are a few safety tips for staying safe in you live in a multi-unit building:

- Make sure all the publicly used areas – hallways, stairwells, parking lots, laundry rooms are well lit.
- Ensure all your windows and doors can be securely locked.
- Do not leave sliding doors to a balcony open, no matter what story you live on.
- Use a Charley bar or a wood board in the runners of sliding glass doors to prevent the door from being forced.
- Enroll in renter's insurance.
- Don't advertise the names of the people that live in your apartment or condo on your mailbox. Strangers have no need to know this information.
- Always lock the door when you leave – home security systems will not work if you leave your door open. It's an invitation for trouble!

What You Should Know About Free Alarm Systems

Is there any such thing as a free alarm system? Think about it, when was the last time you got anything that was free? It's the same with security alarm systems. When you are shopping for alarm systems and the salesperson speaks of "free" or "no money down" ask the questions below.

1. What is the length of the agreement?

All the "free" systems are some type of lease. This means that no matter what your down payment is (there are almost always add-ons to get the system you need) you do not own the system. The standard length of the agreement for these systems is three years. Some have a buy-out clause at the end of the term, you need to know how much this is. The only term agreement that Atlantic Security Systems uses is a monitoring agreement, this is based on your billing cycle; monthly or annually. This contract is not required (although highly recommended) and is cancelable at any time with a 30 day notice. Any unused funds are returned to you promptly.

2. What is the warranty period?

This is usually 90 days, as opposed to Atlantic Security System's one-year parts and labor. Extended warranties are also available.

3. Who will service your system?

This is very important. A security system requires periodic maintenance to perform properly. You should know what the service rates are. Will they be performing the service themselves, or will that contracted to a third party? If contracted out, to whom and where are they located. Atlantic Security Systems is a local company and our certified technicians are the only ones that will service your system.

4. Will your contract be sold as part of your agreement?

Standard procedure for free systems is that after some period, usually 90 days, your contract, which is legally binding, is sold to a larger company. This means that the company who installed the system no longer has any obligation to you. You now must deal with this other company who has no interest in you, beyond your monthly payment. Atlantic Security Systems does not sell your account.

5. What are the "balance of contract" requirements for your agreement?

Standard for these types of agreements are that no matter what the circumstances, such as poor service, moving, or even if your house is destroyed, you still owe the unpaid balance of the contract. And, they are usually set up on a credit card or bank draft. So you have no way to cancel the service, except under the company's terms. We leave the payment terms up to you.

These are just a few of the reasons that free systems are not the good deal they sometimes seem to be. Always get a second or third opinion, use the first proposal as a measuring stick for the other estimates. This way you know you are comparing "apples to apples".

And remember, "If a deal seems to good to be true, it probably isn't"