

Home Alarms



How can I protect myself?

Home alarm systems can be an effective crime prevention tool for many homeowners. They add an extra layer of protection against unwanted intrusion. Additionally, they provide the homeowner some peace of mind. Home alarm systems vary in type and quality. Before purchasing a home alarm system, here are some things to consider.

- The average home alarm system, professionally installed, varies greatly in price. Most require a monthly monitoring fee that you commit to via a contract.
- The average do-it-yourself home alarm system does not require a monthly monitoring fee or a contract.
- Know what you want. The options are many and the homeowner has the advantage of selection and suppliers.
- Do you want intrusion detection only, or do you want fire and smoke detection, water leak detection, etc.?
- Do you want a monthly monitoring service? Costs vary from \$30-\$50 a month.
- Local ordinances may require a fee or fine for police false alarm response. In Bismarck, the fees range from \$15 to \$75 for each false alarm response depending on the number of false alarms you have had in one year.

Other Considerations

1. Find out the qualifications of those installing your system and monitoring your alarm.
2. Find out what happens if you move or want to cancel your service. Compare prices and services. Ask questions and get educated about home alarms.
 - a. Ask for written proposals.
 - b. How much does it cost?
 - c. What are the installation and monitoring fees?
 - d. What is the length of the service contract?
 - e. What are the maintenance and repair procedures?
3. Get recommendations from neighbors, family or friends.
4. Learn the basics before shopping.
5. Consider your needs and the ease and convenience of use. Be sure you understand how to turn your alarm off and on.
6. Consider having a second control panel and/or a panic button installed in the master bedroom. Consider a deadbolt lock on the master bedroom as well.
7. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Don't be pressured into a purchase.
8. Find out what happens to your system in times of power outages. Is there a battery backup?
9. Ask your home insurance company about discounts for home security systems that have been installed in your home.