

## The Safety of Home

*A look at alarm offerings to keep your home safe for your love ones*

There are few things scarier than the thought of someone invading your home. It's not just the potential danger but the feeling of violation, even if you were fortunate enough not to be home at the time of the burglary. Fortunately, the alarm industry has continued to make strides as the years have gone on to improve protection while keeping in mind various family budgets.

Robert Siciliano, a security expert whose clients have included ADT and Century 21, says there are several high-level options to ask your security company about. The first would be a multiple camera set-up inside the house which won't just alert your phone when there is unusual activity but will send a 30-second video clip from the time of detection. If you want to go to the next level, Siciliano says you can stop intruders on the inside by having your security company set up a system which will release a non-toxic white smoke or pepper spray. "It's done in a very similar way to how restaurants have tanks which will dispense flame retardant in case of fire..." he says. "It has a very good chance to stop a robbery in progress." Siciliano says another layer to look at is security that both protects when you're not home but also alerts for house infrastructure problems, such as a water heater blowing when you're on vacation. "Don't think of a security system as just catching a robber in the act but allowing you to know everything that's going on with your house," he says.

Siciliano also recommends focusing on specific points of entry to stop robbers from ever getting in the door. Such as:

**Window.** Your glass is the path of least resistance and the only consolation is it makes noise when penetrated, says Siciliano. He recommends ShatterGARD, a trench-bearing window film that can withstand a baseball bat or a hammer for many minutes before giving way. "If someone is there having to beat a window for 10 minutes then they draw attention to themselves (from the noise), so they'll likely give up," Siciliano says.

**Door.** The door jam is the most vulnerable point for being kicked in since it's often no more than an inch thick, says Siciliano. Door Devil is one way to combat that. It's an 8-inch thick metal plate that's 4 feet long and installed in the door jam, screwing in 9 long bolts. Another option is OnGARD, a mounting into door which attaches to the floor. "You can't open door from inside or outside unless you take the piece out," according to Siciliano.

## Get It Done Right

Siciliano cautions to have professionals put in any security device relating to technology. "(Security) cameras are so advanced now that it's very difficult for the average person to do it right," he says. "You've decided to protect yourself so don't skimp on a minimal (installation) cost when you consider what's on the line."

Finally, remember to alert your Texas Farm Bureau agent when you add any alarm system which incorporates monitoring since that makes you eligible for a 5% discount. In addition, there can be a larger Bureau discount if you add window locks and have a city or county inspector give it a certification.

Sidebar

### **Quick Tips**

--Watch out for the latest scam of offering a free home alarm evaluation. You think you're getting a deal but they're getting the dish on your system and, therefore, how to break in.

--Use your alarm even when you're away for an hour or less. Burglars can get in and out of your home in minimal time so make arming the system a habit, not a once-in-a-while occurrence.

--Ask yourself if you're going overboard. Although security systems can be great for peace of mind, choose a system which still allows you to live your life. Remember: protection is a positive, paranoia isn't.