



RUNWAY

GUIDANCE NOTE ON INTRUDER ALARMS

Note: This information has been provided by the Police Crime Reduction Manager

Every 29 seconds a house is burgled in the UK. On average £1,000 of property is stolen (source British Crime Survey). **The single best measure for preventing domestic burglary is the fitting and use of a good quality alarm system** (Source ABI).

Of the 44,856 homes in the RBC area 31% have alarms, which is also the national average figure. 70% of homeowners purchase their alarm after they are burgled!

Choosing an alarm system

If you are thinking of fitting an alarm system it may be that you, or perhaps a near neighbour, have been burgled and you may be feeling vulnerable. Or, and we hope this is the case, you feel it would be common sense to improve your home security with a visible and audible deterrent to prevent you becoming an easy target. If you are in the first category and are unfortunate enough to have been a victim of a burglary it may be that your insurance company has insisted you have an alarm fitted. About 20% of domestic properties are re-offended against within 12 months of the first offence occurring.

Where to go

There are many alarm installation companies to choose from, and one of the most successful ways of choosing is by recommendation from a satisfied customer. However, it's possible that your insurance company will insist on a company from one of the national regulated bodies. You should in every case obtain at least 3 written quotes from reputable installers and remember that the cheapest may not be the best.

What to expect

The system offered to you should include a control panel, possibly a remote keypad, detectors (which may include passive infra-red units, magnetic contacts, vibration - sensors, glass break detectors) a sounder and anti-foam , anti-tamper bell box with a strobe light. You may also be offered the facility to be linked to a central monitoring station, for an annual fee, and a maintenance agreement with the installing company. (Check with your insurance company what requirement they have).

DIY Route

The alternative to a wired system is a wire-free radio operated alarm, which incorporates all the elements of a wired system but uses a specially allocated frequency to operate. These can be professionally fitted or you can buy them in kit form for DIY fitting. Before deciding which route to proceed down discuss the pros and cons of each system with your local police Crime Reduction Manager; this service is free.

The costs

Find out whether you are leasing or buying outright, whether a maintenance agreement is included in the price and that a 12-month guarantee is offered on parts and labour. Make sure there are no hidden costs, such as call-out charges or a monitoring service you didn't know about and find out exactly who is doing the work – whether the company sub-contracts and whether staff is vetted. Most importantly, make sure you understand exactly how the system works once it is installed. The installer should talk you through all the elements of the system before leaving.

Monitoring

Unfortunately, neither the police nor an alarm company monitoring station will accept emergency calls directly from a DIY system. However, some systems have the facility to accommodate an automatic calling device which will, if the alarm is triggered, repeatedly telephone a series of numbers you have chosen until it receives a reply. Well worth considering if you have elderly or vulnerable relatives, or are away from home for long periods and/or live in an isolated area.

Response

Anyone encountering an activated intruder alarm should not assume that it is a false alarm. Look at the property from a safe vantage point then telephone the local police 9455999, informing them of anything that seems suspicious.

For bells only systems have two local key holders that know how to operate your system and can gain access to your property. Bells only alarms should be registered with the RBC environmental service dept at RBC 9819911. (The police no longer keep or require details of bells only systems)

Further assistance/Actions

1. You can always get independent advice on all aspects of home security and alarm installation from your local police Crime Reduction Manager.
2. Employ a reputable company to fit and maintain your alarm system. Fit the best system you can afford now and use it before you are victimized.
3. Check with your insurance company prior to installation. Warning – if you enjoy a discount because you have an alarm, check the policy conditions to see

if a claim would be invalid in the event of a burglary occurring whilst the alarm is switched off or faulty

4. If funds allow consider having a professionally monitored system
5. Keep your system well maintained and tested.
6. Avoid obvious codes eg 1234 etc and change your code at least every 6 months.
7. Double movement/or heat detectors (dual tecs) are more reliable for sheds and garages, which should be on or added to your system.
8. Clean the keypad regularly so that it's not obvious which numbers are used.

Useful Contacts:

NSI (National Security Inspectorate)
Inspectorate for security systems
0870 205 0000 www.nsi.org.uk

SSAIB (Security Systems & Alarms Board)
Inspectorate for security systems.

NACOSS (national Approved Council for Security Systems)
Inspectorate for Security Systems

British Standards Institute
020 8996 9000 www.bsi-global.com

Police Crime Reduction Manger Rushcliffe Area
West Bridgford Police Station
0115 844 5069