

## Before Buying An Electronic Security System:

Greater Los Angeles Security Alarm Association (GLASAA) believes it is important to be an informed consumer. We have prepared this handy guideline to help you ask important questions before choosing a security provider. An investment in security is one of the most important decisions you can make for your family or business.

### BURGLARY FACTS

- ✓ Most burglaries happen during daylight hours for homes and during non-business hours for commercial properties.
- ✓ The majority of burglaries are by forcible entry through a door or window, however more than 25% of burglars use unlawful entry, in which no force was applied to gain entry.

### SAFETY TIPS

- ✓ Keep all doors and windows closed and securely fastened when away from home or during non-business hours. An open window or door is an invitation for burglars.
- ✓ Lock the door to an attached garage. Don't rely on your automatic garage door opener for security. Keep the perimeter of your home or business well lighted.
- ✓ Never leave clues that you are away on a trip. Have a trusted neighbor collect mail and newspapers while you are away so delivered items do not accumulate.
- ✓ Keep shrubbery trimmed away from entrances and walkways.
- ✓ Invest in a professionally installed security system and make sure it is monitored 24/7 by a U.L listed monitoring center. Homes and businesses that do not use a security system are 3 times more likely to incur a burglary. Insurance companies may offer discounts on property insurance policies for homes or businesses having a security system installed.

### Before considering an alarm company:

- ✓ Ask your insurance agents, family, friends or business associates for referrals.
  - ✓ Contact at least 3 companies for a written quote.

• Before calling for an appointment with the alarm company, ask the following questions:

✓ Are they a member of the national, state and local alarm associations?

✓ Do they possess a valid *ALARM COMPANY OPERATOR* license, issued by the Bureau of Security and Investigative Services for installing, servicing or monitoring electronic security systems?

✓ Are their employees registered as *ALARM COMPANY EMPLOYEES* with the Bureau of Security and Investigative Services?

✓ Do they possess a valid *CONTRACTOR'S LICENSE*, issued by the Contractor's State License Board for installing fire alarm, access control, and camera surveillance systems?

✓ Do they have General Liability, Errors and Omissions, Worker's Compensation and Vehicle insurances in force?

• When an alarm company representative visits your home or business, ask for the following:

✓ Identification

✓ A security inspection of the premises  
Written security recommendations

✓ A list of referrals

During this onsite visit, you should be prepared to discuss your security concerns with a representative of the company. In turn, the company representative should provide you with a risk assessment, evaluating the vulnerable entry points and potential issues that may compromise the security of your home or business.

## COMPONENTS OF AN ALARM SYSTEM

### MASTER CONTROL PANEL

The control unit is the brain of the system, receiving arming and disarming instructions from a keypad station and monitoring all perimeter and interior detectors installed in your home or business. If you choose to add a fire/life safety system, the master control panel and all fire detectors must meet local, state and federal fire codes in a commercial or residential application.

### DETECTION SENSORS

Intrusion protection devices include door and window contacts, motion sensors, glass break

detectors and more. These devices serve as the detection sensors of the system. They alert the system's master control panel of an unwanted entry, fire alarm, maintenance condition or other situation. The master control panel then activates the sounding devices, and sends alarm and non-emergency signals to a central monitoring station. Ask the alarm company about the different forms of perimeter and interior detection sensors and, if applicable, fire/life safety devices, and why they recommend that type of protection.

### MONITORING

The master alarm control panel is capable of sending signals to a central station monitoring facility that provides detailed information about the activation of the alarm system installed in your home or business. When the signal is received at the central station, it tells the operator how to respond to the signal, and if necessary, to send police, fire or paramedics to the premises. To provide another level of security, you should consider adding a back-up communication device that enhances the ability of the signal to transmit to the central station in the event your phone line is cut or out of order.

### ENHANCED CALL VERIFICATION (ECV)

It is important to ask your alarm company if they have adopted a process called Enhanced Call Verification (ECV). Alarm Companies that deploy ECV will call two phone numbers to verify a burglary alarm prior to dispatching police. When available, the second number called should be a cellular phone since most false dispatches occur while arming or disarming the security system. ECV verification procedures are used only for burglar alarm signals. Duress, hold-up, fire and medical alarms are dispatched according to local codes or the alarm user's instructions.

Companies which have implemented ECV serve the community by conserving resources. It is important that the alarm system is operated responsibly. If users need more training, the alarm company should be contacted to request additional instruction. If there is an ongoing problem with equipment that is causing dispatches to invalid alarms, the system should be serviced to eliminate the problem.

### LICENSING

Any company that installs, services or monitors electronic security systems in California is required to be licensed by the Bureau of Security and Investigative Services (BSIS),

Department of Consumer Affairs. The company is issued an Alarm Company Operator (ACO) number that should be on all proposals, contracts and advertising. GLASAA members must possess and maintain this license. In addition, the alarm company's employees must be registered as Alarm Company Employees (ACE).

- To verify an Alarm Company's license is in good standing with the BSIS:

Website: [www.dca.ca.gov.bsis](http://www.dca.ca.gov.bsis)

In addition, many companies install electronic systems, such as fire/life safety, video surveillance, access control, audio/video systems that require different licenses from the California State License Board (CSLB).

- To verify a Contractor's license is in good standing with the CSLB:

Website: [www.cslb.ca.gov](http://www.cslb.ca.gov)

✓ Fire Alarms - C-10 Classification

✓ Locks & Access Control – C-10; C-28

✓ Closed Circuit Video, Audio/Video & Telephone Systems – C-7; C-10

A Final Word...

It is important to choose an alarm company that meets the security needs for your home or business, giving you peace of mind. Your alarm company must be a security partner that will help keep your family, employees or assets safe from the threat of burglary, theft or fire. If you are a better informed consumer, you will be able to make a more informed decision when choosing your alarm company.

Don't take chances with your home or business security needs...choose your alarm company with care.

The members of GLASAA are qualified alarm companies, dedicated to providing the highest level of security services in California. We encourage you to call our list of member companies before investing in an electronic security system for your home or business.

## GLASAA Member Companies

ADT Security Services	(310) 619-2342
Affordable Alarm Systems	(818) 884-9958
Alliance Security Corp	(661) 251-8467
American Central Alarm	(310) 320-5320
Anti Crime Technologies, Inc.	(310) 550-1211
Bay Alarm Company	(925) 808-4459
Boyd & Associates	(818) 752-1888
Brinks Home Security	(949) 727-0398
Clauds Burglar & Fire Alarm	(323) 750-7059
Continental Security Industries, Inc.	(661) 775-7788
CSEC Solutions	(818) 781-0015
Designer Sound Security Systems	(818) 981-9249
Diversified Alarm Service, Inc.	(800) 252-7652
Eagle One Security	(818) 541-9800
Eagle Protection Of California	(310) 320-9100
Eagle Protection Services, Inc.	(310) 320-9100
Gates Security Systems	(310) 454-7741
General Alarm Services	(562) 602-2000
Global Custom Security, Inc.	(818) 889-6900
Guardian Mobile Monitoring Systems	(310) 315-6741
HSM Electronic Protections Services	(510) 252-5642
Magnuson Services	(310) 839-6106
Matrix Security	(818) 707-3442
Post Alarm Systems Inc	(626) 446-7159
Precision Security Systems, Inc.	(909) 629-5998
Preferred Home Security	(888) 425-2765
Private Security/Payless Security	(800) 924-4880
Pro Cal Security	(818) 898-1362
Protect Security Systems	(310) 795-4737
Protection Alarms	(818) 618-0705
Protection One	(818) 373-6200
Response Net Security Services	(818) 932-9833
RSI Alarms	(???) ???-????
San Marino Security Systems, Inc.	(626) 285-7778
Security Design Systems Inc	(626) 285-7268
Security One	(???) ???-????
Sentry Tech Security Alarm Co.	(626) 961-5788
Silver Security	(805) 496-5325
Simpkins Security Services	(805) 736-7046
Sonitrol Of South Los Angeles	(213) 749-0391
Swat Security Systems	(310) 556-0337
Telecomm West Systems, Inc.	(661) 273-3333
Telenet, Inc.	(310) 253-9000
Universal Electronic Alarms	(661) 942-7418
USA Alarm Systems, Inc.	(626) 256-6055
Valley Alarm	(818) 285-1500

# GLASAA

Greater Los Angeles Security Alarm Association

PRESENTS

## A Guide to Choosing an Alarm Company

*This pamphlet was designed for distribution by law enforcement agencies, Crime Prevention Officers and Fire Protection Officers to educate the public regarding electronic security and fire systems.*

*Presented by the*

**Greater Los Angeles Security Alarm Association**

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