

Risk Insights

Advice for you and your business

Burglar Alarm Systems



Protection against intrusion and theft is a fundamental concern of every business owner.

A burglar alarm system is intended to detect a break-in, but will not necessarily prevent one. These systems should be installed with proper physical security reinforcement such as deadbolt locks, adequate lighting, secure basement windows and strong exterior doors.

Burglar alarm systems can be either **monitored** or **unmonitored**. The **monitored system** notifies a third party when the alarm is tripped, who in turn notifies authorities of a burglary or trespasser. The **unmonitored alarm** only sounds on the premises. The unmonitored alarm relies on your neighbours or passers-by to call the police, which they may or may not do. This is cheaper to maintain, but due to the unreliability of response, it may end up being more expensive in the long run.

Keep in mind that it is possible to circumvent monitored alarm systems by cutting the telephone wires before entering the premises. You may want to speak to an alarm company representative and ask the question “what would happen if someone cut the telephone line?” There are many ways to add “line security” to your system. A popular method today is mobile backup. If the phone line is cut, the alarm system will still communicate with the monitoring station wirelessly via a cellular connection.

A monitored alarm system can have an audible delay, to give the monitoring station time to notify the police in anticipation of catching the criminals on the premises. Alarm systems can incorporate visual verification of an intruder on the premises using additional signals to the monitoring station.

Did you know?

For an alarm system to be effective, it needs to ensure a response occurs when it has been activated, hence the advantage of a monitored system over an audible-only system. There are a number of methods available to create the communication link between the alarmed premises and the monitoring centre, the most common being the telephone line. **A monitored system is strongly recommended for all businesses.**

It is important to remember that all businesses are unique and will require different security measures. We encourage you to discuss your options with your chosen security company and your **Federated Loss Prevention Consultant**.

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Burglar Alarm Systems *(continued)*

Common Burglar Alarm System Terms

● Motion Sensor

Motion detection systems **detect movement** in areas covered by the security sensor. Some motion detection systems transmit high frequency radio wave signals into the secure area of a room or hallway. Other systems may use infrared light to detect temperature changes, such as when a person (body heat) walks by the security sensor.

● Contacts

The sensor mechanism is **housed in the switch side** of the sensor and a magnet is housed in the other half. Most door or movable opening detection utilizes **magnetic contact switches**, which have two main components that must stay in contact or close proximity to each other when the sensor is armed. When the door or window is opened, the two parts of the mechanism are separated and the alarm signal is sent.

● Glass Break Sensor

Acoustic glass break sensors **detect the sound of breaking glass**. They can also detect sudden shock waves of a breaking object such as glass or a door being kicked in. In this case, it is the shock wave of the breaking glass, not the sound itself that is being detected.

● Wireless Security Systems

Modern wireless security systems have no cumbersome wiring, which means the **wires can't be pulled out accidentally or have nails hammered through them** which can set the alarm off or disable the system. Wireless systems are more mobile and offer more flexibility within a room or anywhere on the property.

● Beam Security

Photoelectric beams consist of a transmitter and receiver. When the **beam is interrupted, an alarm is triggered**. They can be used inside buildings or outside to protect fenced compounds.

● Supplementary Fire Detection

Smoke and **heat fire detection** as well as **alarm monitoring** can be added to a burglar alarm system to provide additional protection.

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