

Secrets of the "Free" Home Security System:

If you honestly think you're going to get adequate security protection for 'free', you're going to be disappointed. Let's set the record straight about the infamous "free home alarm system". When you're offered a "free" system, it usually consists of the following:

- * An "all in one" wireless keypad, siren, control panel and dialer.
- * One wireless door or window contact, one wireless motion sensor.
- * A long term monitoring contract, which automatically renews (sometimes up to five years).
- * Extra charges for additional contacts, motion sensors, etc.
- * Extra charges called "activation fees" or "police and fire registration fees".
- * **ESPECIALLY SNEAKY:** Some companies that use central monitoring stations that are out of your telephone area code will actually **CHARGE** you to use their 1-800 number, in order for your alarm to send its signal.

So Why Is The System Wireless?

Most of these "free" alarm companies go with wireless because it takes virtually no skill to install. A lot of the programming can be done ahead of time, so the "technician" that installs the system can get the job done as quickly and easily as possible. Many of these employees have little to no skill, because their employers pay them as little as possible. Really talented technicians are paid well, because they are a surprisingly rare and valued commodity in the industry these days. These "free" alarm companies do not attract the best technicians.

What's wrong with these "all in one" wireless units?

If you have an "all in one" system, not only is the keypad disabled, but so is the ENTIRE ALARM SYSTEM, including the siren! They're extremely vulnerable. The best set up for your alarm is to have the keypad, control panel (the "brains" of the system) and siren installed in separate places. So for example if a thief rips the keypad off your wall, it doesn't matter. The dialer that sends your alarm system's signal to the monitoring station is located inside the control panel, which is most likely installed in a separate location, and is not damaged.

They Cannot Be Monitored By Any Other Alarm Company.

It is important that you own your alarm equipment, so that you can switch monitoring companies if you're not happy with their service, or want to shop around for a better monitoring rate. And there are dramatically different levels of service quality and monitoring cost between the various alarm companies! With a "free" system, it is almost certain that it is "locked out". This means that no other alarm company can monitor it. These companies may also use software that can "remotely kill" your alarm system, rendering it useless in a matter of minutes.

They Give A False Sense Of Security.

Protecting your home with one motion sensor and one or two door contacts would not be even adequate protection for the average home owner. It will leave huge gaps in your security protection, allowing an intruder to easily enter your home, and stay a lot longer, before the alarm actually goes off.

The "Free" System Offer Gets Their Foot In The Door!

As explained above, you are definitely going to have to add more equipment to get an acceptable level of security. Typical prices for a wireless device offered by any alarm company would be: \$75-\$95 for a door or window contact, \$90-\$130 for a wireless motion sensor, and about the same cost for a wireless smoke detector. If you decide to go with fire monitoring (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED), or if you need back up for your phone line using cell or radio, the (already inflated) monitoring charges will be much higher. The "free" offer is really a classic "BAIT AND SWITCH" tactic.

The Bottom Line:

Most regular security companies will charge \$300-\$400 for what the "free" companies offer for no charge. After that, devices tend to be the same price, or slightly lower with the non-"free" companies. So for an extra \$300-\$400 upfront, you get a system that is a lot less vulnerable, is more reliable, lasts longer, is installed by the better technicians, and gives you the freedom to shop around for better service and/or a lower monitoring rate.