INTRUDER ALARMS

Why install an intruder alarm system? Intruder alarms are an effective deterrent against burglars. They reduce the likelihood of your home being targeted. However, it should be noted that an intruder alarm is not a replacement for good physical security. It should be regarded as a back-up to good physical and other security measures employed to protect your home.

Intruder alarm systems: Essentially, Intruder alarm systems fall into two categories - 'wired' systems or 'wire-free / wireless' systems. Each of these categories can be sub-divided into two types

•Audible only: When the alarm is activated, an internal and/or external siren/bell operates to draw attention to the building

•Remotely Monitored: When the alarm is activated, the internal/external siren/bell operates and a signal is also sent to a central monitoring station which can inform you, a chosen key holder(s) and/or the Gardaí as required and appropriate.

Auto-dialler - an auto-dialler can be utilised with any of the above systems. When the alarm is activated, the auto-dialler within the alarm system will ring pre-determined telephone numbers to inform you and/or key holders of the alarm activation. It must not be programmed to call the Gardaí.

Understanding and using you alarm system: It is important to understand how your alarm system operates. Your installer should explain the operation of the system to you and your family.

Insist on a training session to demonstrate its features. Don't be baffled by jargon, ask the installer to explain. All key holders should be familiar with the operation of the alarm system and know the activation and deactivation codes etc. Keep instruction manuals in a known and accessible location. Do not write alarm codes etc. on the instruction manual or on places near the control unit or keypad.

What system is best for me? This decision may be influenced by a number of factors including cost, design of residence, location and whether the house is suitably pre-wired or suitable for wire free systems. Ask your local Crime Prevention Officer for advice. Talk to friends and neighbours about systems they have installed. The alarm installation companies can provide specialist advice and your home insurance company may also assist.

Choosing an Alarm Installer: All alarm installers and installation companies must be licensed by the Private Security Authority. A list of all licensed installers is available on www.psa.ie.It is recommended that you obtain at least three quotes from reputable installers.

The Gardaí do not recommend any particular alarm company but do recommend that all installed alarms should comply with the European Standard EN 50131. Note that one of the criteria for a Garda response is that the alarm system meets this standard or the older Irish Standard IS 199 which has now been replaced by EN 50131.

Monitored or un-monitored? This is a matter that should be carefully considered. In order to guarantee a Garda response to an activation of your alarm, you must have a Unique Reference Number (URN) issued by the Gardaí.

These are only issued where the alarm system:

•complies with approved standards,

•has been installed by an approved installer, and

•is monitored by an approved monitoring company.

An Garda Síochána

INTRUDER ALARMS (CONT.)

Further information can be provided by your alarm company, monitoring station, local Garda Crime Prevention Officer or you can download the full Garda Alarm Policy from the Garda website.
If you have a monitored alarm and you have changed WiFi / home telephone provider, contact the monitoring centre to ensure the system is being properly monitored.

GARDA INTRUDER ALARM POLICY

The Garda Alarm Policy has recently been revised with a view to reducing the number of incidences of false alarm activations. This will help to provide a more effective service to the public.
Since January 31, 2008 all alarm systems, including domestic, should have dual verification installed. Your alarm installation company will explain this in detail, but essentially, it involves verifying an alarm activation by means of two or more detection devices which send two separate alarm signals to the monitoring station.

GLOSSARY OF COMMON ALARM TERMS

Control Panel / Box: This is the heart or nerve-centre of the system and, in a domestic residence, is often situated in a cupboard or under the stairs. The control panel is connected to the electricity mains but also has a battery back-up facility.

Keypad: The keypad allows you to input numbers/codes thereby activating or de-activating the alarm. Often placed in the hallway, not far from the entry/exit point. Mainly used to switch the alarm on and off.

Magnetic Contact Sensors: These are sensors that are generally used to detect the opening of a door or window. There are two parts to them: a magnet and a contact and are usually fitted to the surface of the window or door. Flush fitting types are also available.

Movement Sensors/Detectors: Many types are available, PIRs (Passive Infra-Reds) being the most common. They are normally installed in the corner of a room near the ceiling and detect a rapid change in infra-red energy e.g. by the movement of a person. Other types include microwave, ultrasonic and combinations of each (dual technology).

Vibration and Acoustic Sensors/Detectors: Vibration sensors detect physical vibrations e.g. where a door or window is banged in a hard manner. Acoustic sensors detect airborne vibrations e.g. where glass is broken. A dual technology sensor incorporating both is also available.

Personal Attack Button: Also called a 'PANIC' button and has one or two recessed red buttons that, when pressed, causes the alarm to activate immediately and may also transmit a further signal to a remote monitoring station if connected.

Internal Sounder / Bell: This is fitted inside the home and provides a very loud audible warning noise.

External Siren / Bell Box: This is the 'box' that you will see on the outside of homes and other buildings. It is normally sited quite high up, generally just under the eaves, and should be tamper-proof.

Zone: The alarm installation company will, for the purposes of identification and convenience, divide your home into zones when installing your alarm system. These zones are managed by the control unit and can be utilised to de-activate certain areas of your home at particular times, to alert you to open zones when setting your alarm and also to provide information when an alarm activation occurs etc.

USEFUL CONTACTS AND LINKS

•The Garda National Crime Prevention Unit, Garda H.Q., Harcourt Square, Dublin 2.
Tel: (01) 6663669 Email: GNCPU@garda.ie An Garda Síochána www.garda.ie
•The National Standards Authority of Ireland, www.nsai.ie
•Secured by Design https://www.securedbydesign.com/
•The Associated Locksmiths of Ireland
https://www.facebook.com/aloireland/
•The Master Locksmiths Association
www.masterlocksmiths.co.uk

Crime Prevention Video

www.garda.ie

Garda Emergency – 999/112
Garda Confidential Line (Free Phone) – 1800 666111