



Security.Improved

# **/ LOOK TO US BECAUSE WE'RE LOOKING OUT FOR YOU**

Advice for your domestic security

[nsi.org.uk](http://nsi.org.uk)

# / CAN YOU AFFORD NOT TO SECURE YOUR HOME?

Most of us don't think about the implications of a break-in or the need for a home security system until it's too late. A burglary doesn't just cause financial loss and disruption, it can have a significant emotional impact too.

According to Directgov, the Government's digital information service, a home is five times more likely to be burgled if it has no security measures in place than if it has basic measures in place such as adequate door and window locks. Taking the extra step by having an intruder alarm or CCTV system fitted will really help protect your home and valuables.

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## NSI = PEACE OF MIND

Even more important is making sure your security system is professionally installed and maintained. The National Security Inspectorate (NSI) is recognised as the leading UK certification body for the security and fire protection industries. For over 40 years we have carried out regular, robust audits of electronic security installers, checking their management processes and technical expertise, so that you, the homeowner, can have faith in their capabilities and competence.

**We've put together this simple guide to help you decide what security measures might be right for you, plus some tips you can use to protect your home.**

# TOP TIPS

**"YOU CAN HELP REDUCE THE RISK OF YOUR HOME BEING TARGETED BY FOLLOWING THESE SIMPLE TOP TIPS:"**



- ✓ Do not leave your keys or important documents near doors, windows or letterboxes
- ✓ **Ensure your doors and windows have good quality locks – and use them!**
- ✓ Close and lock all doors and windows even if you are only popping out for a few minutes
- ✓ **Always keep sheds, garages and outbuildings locked and secure**
- ✓ Cancel deliveries such as milk, when you are away from home for days or weeks
- ✓ **Ask a neighbour to remove post protruding from your letterbox if you are away and to keep a general eye on your property**
- ✓ Keep your valuables out of sight
- ✓ **Use timers to ensure some lights come on when it is dark before you return home**
- ✓ Mark or etch your property with your postcode, house or flat number
- ✓ **Install a visible burglar alarm**
- ✓ Do not leave ladders or garden tools accessible which could be used to gain access to the property
- ✓ **Residents of multi-occupied premises should not grant entry to people via an entry phone if they do not know who they are and be wary of 'tailgaters' attempting to gain access**
- ✓ Do not label your house keys in case they fall into the wrong hands
- ✓ **Be mindful of the telephone message you provide on your answer phone if you are away for any length of time – do not specify your return date**
- ✓ Check your household insurance policy to ensure it is adequate for your needs and that it will cover you in case you are away for extended periods of time
- ✓ **If you have a burglar alarm installed by an NSI approved company, check with your insurance company as you may be entitled to a discount on your policy**
- ✓ Remember to set your burglar alarm when you leave your property (this may be an insurance requirement)
- ✓ **Shred any documents that contain personal information before putting in your bin**
- ✓ Fencing and gates should be well maintained and secure. Ensure hedging and shrubs are regularly pruned so they do not obscure unwanted visitors and consider motion detectors to activate security lighting

# YOUR SECURITY OPTIONS

Burglars will be deterred simply by the visible presence of the warning device fitted to the external wall of your property.

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However, audible-only alarms will not give you an automatic police response. Police response will only result from a 999 call by someone who has witnessed a break-in or criminal activity.

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Intruder alarm systems connected to a monitoring service are the best. Opting for a remotely monitored system where alarm signals are sent to an Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) ensures the police are contacted on your behalf in the event of a confirmed alarm. Alarm signals are filtered at the ARC to help minimise the risk of losing police response to your intruder alarm system.

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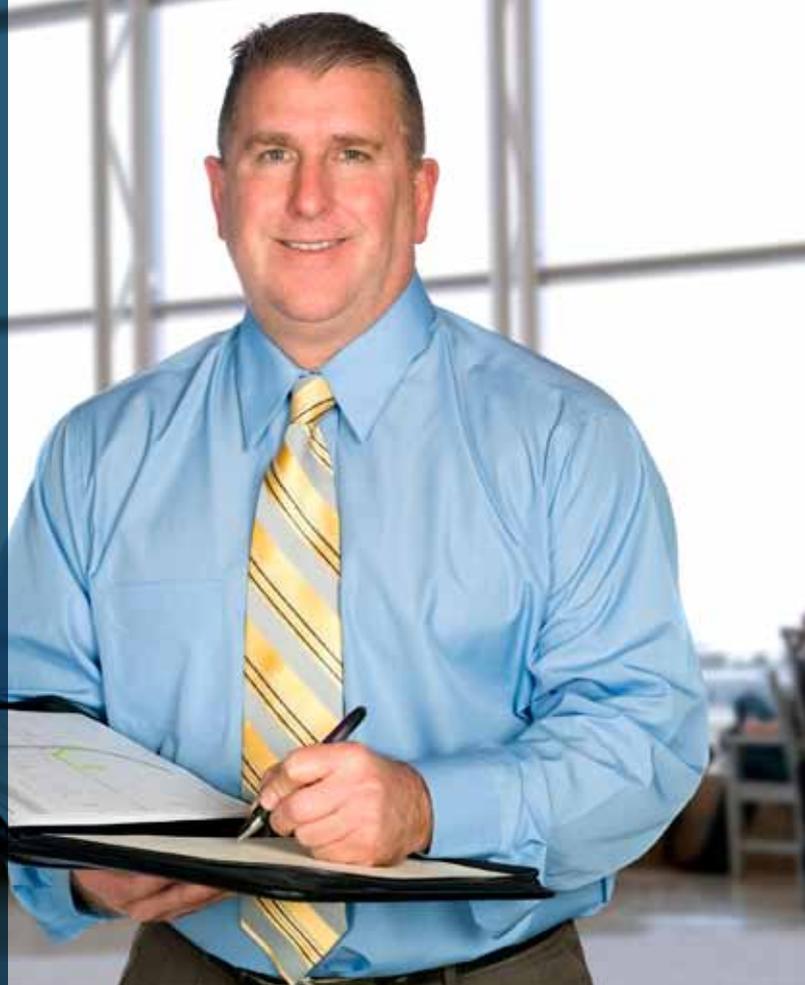
There are many alarm systems on the market ranging from the relatively inexpensive 'audible-only' type systems to the more sophisticated systems offering a broader range of capabilities including remote signalling to an ARC.

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You can ask the Crime Reduction Officer at your local police station for advice before you select a system. If you want your intruder alarm to be effective and meet the requirements set out by the police and your insurer, it's essential to have it installed and maintained in accordance with the required standards by a professional company such as those approved by NSI.



# **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**



## **/ I'M LOOKING FOR A COMPANY TO MAINTAIN/SERVICE MY ALARM SYSTEM CAN YOU HELP ME?**

We suggest you visit our website [www.nsi.org.uk](http://www.nsi.org.uk) and search for an approved company in your area. Just type in your post code and select the type of service you require, for example "intruder alarm/ CCTV/access control. We suggest you obtain at least three quotations as prices and service options may vary between companies." You also need to decide if you would prefer a Gold or Silver approved installation company.

## **/ WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A GOLD AND SILVER APPROVED COMPANY?**

Gold and Silver approved companies meet the same technical standards for their installations. NSI Gold companies must also operate a documented Quality Management System to BS EN ISO 9001:2008

## **/ CAN I PRINT A LIST OF NSI APPROVED COMPANIES IN MY AREA?**

Yes – put your location in the search box in the top right hand corner of the Home Page for a list of approved companies in your area.

## **/ IS IT BETTER TO HAVE A WIRED ALARM SYSTEM OR A WIRE-FREE SYSTEM?**

Whether wired or not, at NSI we audit companies to ensure their work complies with industry standards. We do not favour different types of systems, only that they comply, so it comes down to personal preference.

## **/ HOW CAN I CHECK THAT MY INSTALLER IS NSI APPROVED?**

The best way is to visit our website [www.nsi.org.uk](http://www.nsi.org.uk) or call us on 01628 637512

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## **WHY HAS MY INSURER INSISTED UPON AN NSI INSTALLER?**

This is because insurers know that NSI rigorously audits the work of its approved companies against industry standards, thus lessening risk.

## **WHY SHOULD I CHOOSE AN NSI INSTALLER?**

Before we grant approval to a security company, it must show us that it meets important criteria for approval including reputability and experience of management, financial stability, insurance cover, secure premises and appropriate tools, vehicles and equipment. We also ensure, for example, that company personnel, including the engineers that may visit your home, are security screened.

## **I'VE BEEN TOLD MY HOME NEEDS A RISK ASSESSMENT WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?**

A risk assessment will be carried out to ensure that the design of the alarm system is suitable for your needs, taking into account factors such as location of your property, value of the contents and local crime patterns.

## **WHAT ACTUALLY IS A MONITORED ALARM SYSTEM?**

By this we mean an intruder alarm system that transmits signals to an approved ARC which provides twenty-four hour monitoring throughout the year.

## **WHAT IS AN UNMONITORED OR AUDIBLE-ONLY SYSTEM?**

This is an alarm system where only local audible warning devices are activated if an intrusion is detected. There is no connection to an ARC.

## **WHAT IS AN ALARM TRANSMISSION SYSTEM?**

This is the system that enables alarm signals to be transmitted from your property to the ARC. There are many different types of alarm transmission systems on the market and it is best for you to discuss the options that are available with your NSI approved company.

## **WHY HAS MY INSTALLER URGED ME TO TAKE UP A MAINTENANCE CONTRACT?**

The maintenance visit shows that your alarm system is functioning properly. Audible-only alarm systems should be maintained once a year while a system that signals to an approved ARC needs to be maintained twice a year. An NSI approved company must provide a twenty-four hour emergency number for access to a duty engineer.

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## **/// I'M NOT SURE IF I AM PAYING THE RIGHT PRICE FOR MY SYSTEM. HOW CAN I CHECK?**

You will find out by obtaining at least three quotations from NSI approved companies. Remember that the lowest price may not necessarily be the best option for you. Each company may have a different idea about the design of the system you should have. You also need to consider maintenance and if your contract will include the cost of emergency call-outs.

## **/// WHAT HAPPENS IF I HAVE A POWER CUT?**

All systems have a main back-up battery. This battery ensures the system remains operational during power outages and in modern systems can power the system for at least 12 hours. When the power is restored, the system is usually designed to recharge the battery from the mains so that the battery continues to be able to provide back-up if another outage takes place.

## **/// WHAT IS A CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE?**

A Certificate of Compliance will certify that your security system has been installed to the relevant industry standards by an NSI approved company. A copy may also be given to your insurer to confirm an NSI approved company has carried out the installation.

## **/// WHEN WILL I RECEIVE MY CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE?**

You will receive an NSI Certificate of Compliance on completion of the installation which has been carried out to your satisfaction.

## **/// WHAT HAPPENS IF I MAKE A MISTAKE SETTING THE ALARM?**

Your NSI approved company will train you to operate the system, including setting and unsetting and will explain what should happen in the unlikely event that you may make a mistake. Please note, however, that too many false alarms may mean loss of police response.

## **/// WHAT HAPPENS IF I HAVE A FAULT WITH MY SYSTEM?**

Providing your system is kept under a maintenance contract then the NSI approved company will be happy to investigate any faults or false alarms that may arise from your system.

## **/// WHAT SHOULD I LOOK OUT FOR WITH MY MAINTENANCE CONTRACT?**

As well as the cost, you will need to know the notice you require should you decide to cancel your maintenance contract. You should read the contract carefully as they can vary considerably in terms of what is included. For example, some contracts include the cost of replacement equipment if failures occur, whereas others only cover the cost of carrying out maintenance to check the correct functioning of the alarm system. Where relevant, alarm monitoring charges are also included as part of the contract.

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## **WILL I OWN MY SECURITY SYSTEM?**

Most security alarm systems are bought outright, but there are still companies that offer lease agreements. You would need to discuss this at the time of getting your quotation.

## **CCTV SYSTEMS**

### **WHAT CAN I EXPECT WHEN LOOKING FOR A CCTV SYSTEM?**

There are many different cameras each designed for different applications, i.e, black and white, colour, day and night, wide angled, high and medium resolution. To avoid disappointment it is very important at the consultation stage to ensure that you get what you want and that your requirements are clearly specified in your quotation. Very often you have to pay more than you might think to get good quality images and recordings.

### **HOW DO I MANAGE THE PICTURES TAKEN ON MY CCTV ON MY DIGITAL RECORDER?**

With digital CCTV technology you don't have to re-play yards of tape to search for an incident. You can search simply by entering a date and time or pointing to a specific time band on a monitor screen. Carrying out this exercise should not interrupt the normal recording.

## **WHERE CAN CAMERAS BE FITTED?**

Care does need to be taken that privacy is not invaded. Cameras can be fitted internally and externally, usually on brackets. External cameras are usually located inside weatherproof housings.

### **MY NEIGHBOUR IS USING A HIDDEN CAMERA. IS THIS ALLOWED?**

There are restrictions against using covert CCTV. You would need to check the Data Protection legislation at [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk) to see the current requirements including the Information Commissioner's CCTV Code of Practice.





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**// PROTECT THE THINGS YOU VALUE MOST.  
ENSURE THE SECURITY COMPANY YOU  
CHOOSE IS NSI APPROVED.**

For over 40 years, NSI has been rigorously auditing companies within the UK security and fire sectors. Choose an NSI approved company and you know they will work to the highest industry standards.

To find an NSI approved company go to [nsi.org.uk](https://www.nsi.org.uk) or call us on **01626 637512**

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