

# Security Systems for the Home

By Cathy Dausman



Technicians monitor home security systems at Bay Alarm Company.

Photo provided

To alarm or not to alarm; that is the question. Homes in affluent communities, Lamorinda included, can be magnets for thieves. An alarm system may be one way to prevent your house from becoming the next burglary statistic.

"I'm all for 'em," says Moraga Police Chief Robert Priebe, who believes they deter break-ins. He says his home is alarmed, but cautions the systems can cause problems for the police department if they are not properly maintained. Priebe also suggests homeowners become familiar with an alarm company's reporting procedures before making a purchase. How the call is routed, and whether the call center is out of town can

affect response time.

Orinda Detective Dan Jeffries says burglars who've been caught tell police they simply won't bother a home with a security system. He says homeowners should "announce to the world" they have an alarm system. Jeffries, who brought the concept for Orinda's burglary audit with him from a previous police department, adds homeowners should also keep their home exterior well lit at night, and trim vegetation away from entry points.

Lafayette's Police Chief Eric Christensen agrees, but cautions: "As with all security devices, the alarm needs to be activated when you leave the home and

you need to take the maintenance of the system as one of the overall costs."

Answering basic home and lifestyle questions can help homeowners determine what kind of security system works for them. How large is the house? How many points of entry (doors and windows) does it have? Has it been pre-wired for a security system? Should the alarm system be a hard-wired or wireless? Who will install the alarm—the homeowner or an alarm technician?

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