

False sense of security

Category: "Information"

By Frank Fourchalk

Home Security Consultant, Syndicated Columnist

There are many areas of home security that are still misunderstood. I have listed 3 areas with clarification to help consumers avoid a "false sense of security".

Alarms are not monitored by police stations

Police, Fire and Medical personal do not monitor alarms. The normal practice is for a monitored alarm system to be connected via telephone line to a monitoring station. When a home alarm has been triggered, the monitoring station would then try and make contact with the homeowner by telephone to verify whether an intrusion had actually taken place.

Once the monitoring company makes contact with the homeowner, a confidential code or password would have to be given to the dispatcher. Obviously if a burglar set off the alarm, he or she would not answer the phone and certainly wouldn't know the password.

If by chance the homeowner is not home, the monitoring company may try to phone other names on the owner's contact list. This contact list would have been determined at the time the homeowner purchased the alarm system. Once the monitoring station made confirmation of a home violation, the police would be dispatched.

Chains don't keep crooks out

The security chain is mounted on the interior door moulding and the slide catch is mounted on the door, with the opening for the chain located away from the door edge. Most door chains sold today are rendered useless when it comes to protecting your home. But there's something about this 1950's mindset we can't seem to eradicate.

Gone are the Edsels, Hi Fi's and saddle shoes, but for some reason door chains have stood the test of time. After thousands of warnings from security professionals and police officers, consumers still toss these useless blister packs into their shopping carts.

Don't assume a couple of 1/2 inch screws and a light gauge metal chain are going to come between you and the bad guys. If you open your door on these inferior links, you could not only be jeopardizing your safety, but placing your family's safety in harm's way.

Replace door chains with door viewers with a radius of 180 to 200 degrees to give maximum optics. Try and purchase a door viewer or peep hole with a cover that falls in front of the inside lenses to restrict intruders from using a reverse lenses to view inside your home from the outside. When you want to view who's at your door, simply move the cover to the side and look through the door viewer.

"Do Not Copy" stamped on a key doesn't always work

Most homes today sport pin tumbler locks. These locks have very common keyways and their key blanks are readily available. Even if you have "do not copy" stamped on these keys, they can be copied easily. "Do Not Copy" in most cases is nothing more than a polite request to the holder of the key not to duplicate it.

The only way to assure that your key will not be duplicated is to install a high security locking system with restricted keyways. When purchasing a high security locking system for your home, you will have several choices.

High security locks come with owner's cards. You must sign this card upon purchase of your new high security product. It is recommended that you keep your key order card in a safe place.

When you present your signed card to order extra high security keys your locksmith will validate the signature on the card by comparing it with the signature on a signed photo identification. When a person ordering a high security key is not the signatory on the card, your locksmith will require a letter of instruction bearing the signature appearing on the card and specifically identifying the person permitted to order the high security key, validate the signature on the letter by comparing it with the signature on the card and validate the identity of the person ordering the key from a signed photo identification.