The holiday season is a busy time of year for many, especially for those looking to make a profit. Thieves who target residential homes are looking for valuable items that they can turn over quickly for some cash, and at this time of year gifts can be the easiest grab. However, no matter the time of year, break-ins are a reality.

While the prevalence of police-reported crimes continues to decrease in Canada, in 2011 break-ins were one of the most common forms of property crime in Canada. Police reported over 181,200 break-ins, with more than 6 in 10 (63 percent) of break-ins occurring in residential areas. Installing a security system in your home is your best option to ensuring your safety and security.

Who should you turn to?

When one chooses to outfit their home with a security system, a number of questions often arise: What steps should I take to find an alarm system? How can I reduce the risk of false alarms? Will my alarm system be compatible with new technologies? Keeping your home safe and secure begins with knowing who to turn to. Security professionals play an important role in your home protection plan. The Canadian Security Association (CANASA) represents more than 1300 security organizations across Canada, including Canadian Accredited Security Contractors (CASC) Companies, monitoring companies, and consultants.

Choosing the system that’s right for you

Your security system should be tailored to meet both your specific security needs and your budget. Ensure that the security company visits your home to perform a site inspection and security audit before you commit to any purchases. The company should provide you with an evaluation of your premises, and explain how you can improve your home’s security beyond the addition of an electronic alarm system. When choosing an alarm company, be sure to consult summaries of three alarm companies. When comparing companies, be sure to compare the number and types of products to be installed. If there is a discrepancy, make sure you understand the difference between the security systems offered. Lastly, find out how long the security company has been in business, and ask to see evidence of the company’s expertise and employee training. When you are consulting an electronic security contractor company, find out if the company is accredited through the Canadian Accredited Security Contractors (CASC) program.

Electronic security companies are constantly changing and upgrading their equipment to accommodate mobile and tablet devices for people on the go, and must stay up to date on the latest security industry products and trends. Your chosen electronic security company should work with you to create a security plan that best suits your lifestyle and requirements.

The specter of false alarms

Once you have installed an alarm system, many homeowners often deal with false alarms, something that is entirely preventable. Ensuring that your alarm system is easy accessible from the exit point and the arming delay is set for a reasonable period allow you with more time to exit your household before the system arms.

Alongside this, requesting annual maintenance inspections to ensure your security system is performing properly and keeping your alarm monitoring station’s “call list” updated will make it easier for you and your monitoring station to ensure your safety.

Keeping you and your family safe this holiday season and year round begins with taking the right precautionary steps. This report aims to provide you with the tips, tricks, and tools to ensuring that you sleep soundly in your home.

To learn more about CANASA and find a security professional near you, visit canasa.org.

ESSENTIAL HOME SAFETY INFORMATION FOR YOU

3 FACTS

False alarms How they affect your safety
Gas and fire Protecting yourself from “The Silent Killer”

Property Brothers Drew & Jonathan Scott speak about keeping your home and family safe.
Radon—an invisible radioactive gas is the second leading cause of lung cancer in Canada and it could be hiding in your basement.

Protecting yourself from radon can be easy

Radon is a gas that is easy to ignore. Its colourless, odourless and tasteless nature makes it easy for radon to go unnoticed but it is something that should be taken lightly. It is a radioactive gas and can cause serious health problems.

The Radiation Safety Institute of Canada wants to raise awareness and detection rates of radon. President and CEO of the institute, Steven Mahoney, said: “The public are not as aware of radon as they should be. It is the only way to know the levels of concentration.”

What is radon?

Radon occurs naturally and is formed when uranium breaks down in soil, rock and water. In the outdoor air, radon is readily diluted so its concentration is not harmful, but when it enters homes, schools or workplaces the concentration levels can build up and it can become a threat to human health.

Mahoney explained: “When this radioactive gas gets attached to dust and then gets inhaled it can get lodged in the lungs. Over time this build up can lead to lung cancer.”

“Research by Health Canada estimates that 16 percent of lung cancer deaths among Canadians are attributable to indoor radon exposure, making radon the second leading cause of lung cancer after smoking.”

Radon can enter homes through the cracks in foundations or other unsealed openings. Mahoney said: “It is insidious but it is not hard to protect your home against it, it’s a solvable problem. It should not be ‘out of sight, out of mind.’ It is the obligation of the homeowner or employer to do a test to check their levels of radon.”

“Radon levels tend to be higher in winter and can vary significantly from day to day, it is recommended that measurements be taken over a 90 day period during the heating season.”

Radon can cause serious health problems. According to Health Canada, radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer after smoking.

The Radiation Safety Institute of Canada recommends that radon concentration levels be taken in the heating season (October to April) because, as Mahoney explains: “Radon levels tend to be higher in winter months because homes are sealed up and there is less ventilation.”

Getting rid of radon

A recent survey of 14,000 homes, conducted by Health Canada, revealed that around 7 percent of homes have high radon levels. If you discover that you are living with a high concentration of radon there are highly trained professionals who can help you reduce that level of concentration.

The most successful way of reducing radon levels is the installation of a specialized extraction fan that draws the radon gas out of the home. The motto of The Radiation Safety Institute of Canada is ‘Good science in Plain Language’ and this sums them up perfectly. They are raising awareness about the dangers of radon in a way that can be understood by everyone, not just scientists.

If you discover that your home has high levels of radon.

Read more on the web: www.radon.ca

Joie Richefort

Contact us today!
**Question:** False alarms lower the likelihood of a police response to your emergency, how can you limit false alarms so you never cry wolf?

**Answer:** Picking an alarm company with an enhanced call verification system and taking proactive steps will help you to reduce false alarms.

- **Understand your emergency system:** Knowing how to properly operate and maintain your security system is key. Ask your alarm installer to train you and other users where your alarm is being installed. Often times, it is other users that are unfamiliar with the system that trigger false alarms. By ensuring that all users know both the passcode for your system and your monitoring station’s phone number, you can create a safe environment for everyone.

- **Maintain your monitoring station’s “call list”:** Monitoring stations can be proactive in determining if emergency response teams should be dispatched to your home in the case of an alarm, if they have the correct contact information. Make sure to keep your monitoring station’s “call list” up to date with current phone numbers for you and your contacts.

- **Ask your monitoring station about Enhanced Call Verification (ECV):** Enhanced Call Verification (ECV) for security systems can help to reduce false dispatches. A monitoring station instructed to use ECV will try to get in touch with two or more contacts to confirm an alarm’s validity before sending a first responder dispatch. According to the False Alarm Reduction Association (FARA), communities that require ECV have seen emergency response to false alarms reduced by 30 to 50 percent.

- **Schedule an annual inspection of your alarm:** Request annual maintenance inspections for your security system to ensure proper performance. Replacing your system’s battery every three to five years is the first step in taking a proactive approach.

- **Monitor activity in your home:** Before making changes to your home, including renovations, contact your alarm company to ensure these changes will not affect your system and possibly trigger a false alarm. Ask to have a cancel signal installed should you accidentally trigger a false alarm. In the event a false alarm does occur, there are certain measures your alarm company can take to verify the seriousness of the alarm. Informed two-way response is an important step in the verification process. Through the use of cameras, radio, cellphone’s, and tablets, alarm companies now have a wide assortment of tools to reach you. These tools allow your alarm company to confirm whether there has been a break in and dispatch resources accordingly. Two-way response verification has allowed companies to lower false alarm rates, and ensure that emergencies are responded to effectively.

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**User error is the number one cause of false alarms. False alarms not only waste resources on emergency response services, but can cause frustration for homeowners.**

When choosing to install an alarm in your home, make sure to follow these tips to reduce your risk of triggering false alarms:

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**Improving Response Time**

Installing an electronic security system can be one of the best steps you can take in securing your home. However, it is extremely important to maintain proper use and care of your alarm system. Security systems that are not installed or used correctly may trigger a false alarm, which can cause an unnecessary drain of emergency response personnel.

User error is the number one cause of false alarms. False alarms not only waste resources on emergency response services, but can cause frustration for homeowners. When choosing to install an alarm in your home, make sure to follow these tips to reduce your risk of triggering false alarms:

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The Best Security at the Best Price!

**10 Reasons Why AlarmForce Should Protect Your Home:**

1. You can get an AlarmForce home alarm for ZERO DOWN and just $25/Month!
2. Live Two-Way Voice is FREE in every system!
3. Installation, Activation and Warranty are FREE!
4. AlarmForce p promises the fastest response time through the best form of monitoring!
5. We haven’t changed our monitoring rates in 20 years!
6. No high pressure salespeople will come to your house!
7. All systems are monitored by AlarmForce
8. Only with AlarmForce can you get VideoRelay® – Live Two-Way Voice Video System!
9. No other company’s lawn sign scares burglars off like AlarmForce!
10. AlarmForce Protects over 250,000 People across North America!

AlarmForce home alarm systems are monitored and serviced by AlarmForce. This way we can guarantee higher quality service and a better response.

FARA
Canadian Security Association
For more information visit www.falsealarm.ca

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**What Our Customers Say About Us:**

[Customer testimonial]

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**Ask JF Champagne, Executive Director, Canadian Security Association:**

With over 25 years of experience in the alarm industry, JF Champagne, Executive Director of the Canadian Security Association, is a well-respected authority on the topic of false alarms.

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[Contact Information]
Think you know about fire and carbon monoxide safety? Take this short home safety quiz to test your knowledge!

HOME SAFETY: TRUE OR FALSE

1. Smoke and CO alarms last forever whether hardwired, plug-in or battery powered.
   T
   F

2. CO alarms must be installed on the ceiling, like smoke alarms.
   T
   F

3. There are two types of smoke alarms, each with different sensing technology.
   T
   F

4. There is dangerous radioactive material in smoke alarms.
   T
   F

5. It is illegal to throw out a smoke or CO alarm into the regular garbage.
   T
   F

6. Having working smoke alarms increases your chance of escaping a fire by 50 percent.
   T
   F

7. On average, you have under three minutes to escape a fire before it reaches ‘flashover’.
   T
   F

Learn more about these new smoke alarms and other safety devices at www.homedepot.ca.

SOURCE: The Home Depot Canada

The Home Depot and Kidde have combined to offer enhanced smoke and CO alarm systems. The Home Depot Canada offers new smoke and carbon monoxide alarms that are smarter and last longer.

The Home Depot and Kidde have teamed up to simplify home safety. Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms silently go about their business day-in and day-out. But they don’t last forever—all alarms wear out, just like most other household devices.

When it comes time to replace them, the rule is: replace smoke alarms every 10 years and CO alarms every 7 years. But, what if you have purchased a combination alarm that offers protection from both smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in the same model? What is the replacement rule then?

Intelligent alarms
Combination alarms

Canadians are taking home safety very seriously. According to a recent survey by the Canadian Association for Home and Property Insurers, the majority of Canadians (81 per cent) recognize the importance of having smoke alarms in their homes. However, only 56 per cent of surveyed Canadians have hardwired smoke alarms installed in their homes. Kidde Canada, the country’s leading smoke alarm manufacturer, has recently introduced two advanced combination smoke and CO alarms—a Canadian first! Available exclusively at The Home Depot, these new “intelligent” combo alarms react more quickly to real fires while at the same time better differentiate between false alarms and the real thing. One unit is battery powered, the other is hardwired with a battery backup in case of a power outage.

These new advanced combination alarms take direct aim at a major consumer complaint of all alarms—they go off too easily if you burn the toast or have a shower that throws off too much steam. They also solve the replacement issue that used to exist with combination smoke and carbon monoxide alarms: the CO sensors in these new alarms are the first in Canada to be certified to last 10 years—the same as smoke alarms.

“Innovations that make alarms smarter, less intrusive, and last over 40 percent longer is why Kidde remains the brand Canadians choose most,” says Carol Heller, a home safety specialist with the company. “When it comes to protecting your family, the best technology is the best investment you can make.”

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SOURCE: The Home Depot Canada
There are two types of smoke alarms: Ionization and Photoelectric. Smoke alarms wear out! Replace them every 10 years whether battery or hardwired. Smoke alarms were invented by Dr. Charles F. Dowdell and Dr. Robert J.фердин. Modern Family have made fun of the TV show’s smoke alarm that quiets the alarm while you clear the air. Also, do not install a smoke alarm near kitchens or bathrooms. Smoke alarms are less prone to false alarms. But are most likely to sound a false alarm because I have electric heat.’

For most Canadians, home safety is #1 Cause of home fires. So, take these steps to protect your family:

- Install one smoke alarm on every storey of your home and outside all sleeping areas. Sleep with bedroom doors closed if you have a wood or gas fireplace, or a garage or attached carport. You need a CO alarm as well.
- Smoke and shower steam are the #1 cause of false alarms. Always replace batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors as soon as you note their low battery signal.
- Smoke alarms with a digital display show the battery levels. Bat- tery levels as low as 10 percent can trigger false alarms.
- Fire safety officials, thousands of Canadians are exposed to carbon monoxide each year and some die. The ONLY way humans can detect deadly CO is with a CSA-approved carbon monoxide alarm.
- There are two types of smoke alarms: Ionization and Photoelectric. Ionization alarms are a bit cheaper to install.
- Carbon monoxide poisoning is odourless, tasteless and deadly. Carbon monoxide is colourless, odourless, tasteless and fatal. If you feel nauseous, listless, or if your fingers or lips turn blue, you may be breathing carbon monoxide.
- About 60 percent of Canadians do not have a CO alarm. But if you have even one potential source of carbon monoxide in your home, take these steps to protect your family:
  1. Install Photoelectric smoke alarms on the first floor and Photoelectric carbon monoxide detectors on the second floor.
  2. Install a hardwired CO alarm to the alarm system for added security. Consider installing hardwired smoke and CO alarms. These will sound an alarm even when a fire alarm is not operating.
  3. Install a mechanical door closer that will automatically close doors when an alarm sounds.
  4. Replace CO alarms every 7-10 years depending on the manufacturer, whether battery operated or hardwired.
  5. Change CO alarm batteries at least once per year.

To learn more, visit www.safeathom.ca.

**For more carbon monoxide safety tips, go to www.safeathom.ca.**

Stephen Gamble
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Stephen Gamble
editorial@mediaplanet.com
Dre and Jonathan Scott are well known on TV as *The Property Brothers*. Their show has often featured the need for a child-friendly home. In this article, they talk about how to make your home safe and secure.

### Child Safety

Our homes are generally furnished with adults in mind and thus create hazards for children. Indeed, most injuries to children occur in the home. The US Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that about 70% of childhood injuries happen at home. The most common injuries include:

- **Falls**—This is the most frequent cause of injury to children at home. Falls are the leading cause of injury in children between the ages of 1 and 4 years old. Most injuries happen in the home, with children falling from stairs, beds, tables, and counters.

- **Poisoning**—This is most often caused from medication, household cleaning products, and personal care products. Most poisoning occurs when eating food. Strangulation is usually caused by cords, strings, and closely supervised your child when they are on the change table.

- **Drowning**—This is usually caused by hot tubs and swimming pools. Children can drown in as little as two inches of water. Always stay within arm’s reach.

- **Burns**—These can occur in the kitchen, on the stove, or from hot water. Always keep hot water away from children.

### Making Your Home Safe

1. **What makes you passionate about home renovation?**
   - Dre: Even though we have bought/renovated many homes, what makes us passionate about child-ren’s safety is that we can help prevent injuries and make our homes a more secure place for children.
   - Jonathan: What makes us passionate about child-ren’s safety is that we can help prevent injuries and make our homes a more secure place for children.

2. **What aspects of security are important for home buyers to keep in mind?**
   - Dre: Keep one hand on your baby while he is on the change table.
   - Jonathan: Keep one hand on your baby while he is on the change table.

3. **How can you identify potential safety issues in a home?**
   - Dre: Look for open or closed circuits with safety & security was a primary concern.
   - Jonathan: Look for open or closed circuits with safety & security was a primary concern.

4. **What are some typical facets of homes that homeowners typically overlook?**
   - Dre: The biggest safety hazards in the home surround fire & structure, so it is important to check the foundation that could result in spontaneous burning in the foundation & wall.
   - Jonathan: The biggest safety hazards in the home surround fire & structure, so it is important to check the foundation that could result in spontaneous burning in the foundation & wall.

5. **What can you do to keep your children safe?**
   - Dre: Use safety products to secure the TV to the wall.
   - Jonathan: Use safety products to secure the TV to the wall.

6. **How do you make your home feel like a dream home that is safe and secure?**
   - Dre: Get into a home that is safe and secure.
   - Jonathan: Get into a home that is safe and secure.

7. **What do you do to make your home an unsavoury place to be for would-be intruders?**
   - Dre: Keep the fireplace on.
   - Jonathan: Keep the fireplace on.

8. **What are the top safety hazards and home security issues that new homeowners should be proactive about?**
   - Dre: Solid foundation—Look for Devon cracks, framing in foundation and set-ting. This should be addressed before further problems.
   - Jonathan: Solid foundation—Look for Devon cracks, framing in foundation and set-ting. This should be addressed before further problems.

9. **What is one thing you could tell Canadians about Safety & Security, what would it be?**
   - Dre: Education is key. Know your area. Always get an inspection whether the house is old or new work.
   - Jonathan: Education is key. Know your area. Always get an inspection whether the house is old or new work.

10. **How can people ensure that their home is 100% safe and secure?**
    - Dre: Visit the property at various times a day, like the kitchen then turn on the water.
    - Jonathan: Visit the property at various times a day, like the kitchen then turn on the water.

11. **What is the biggest factor we see is probably location?**
    - Dre: The biggest factor we see is probably location.
    - Jonathan: The biggest factor we see is probably location.

12. **What is the most important for home buyers to remember?**
    - Dre: The most important for home buyers to remember is that they should be proactive about the home they are purchasing.
    - Jonathan: The most important for home buyers to remember is that they should be proactive about the home they are purchasing.

13. **How do you help your clients create a dream home for themselves?**
    - Dre: They help their clients create a dream home for themselves.
    - Jonathan: They help their clients create a dream home for themselves.

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16. **How do you help your clients create a dream home for themselves?**
    - Dre: They help their clients create a dream home for themselves.
    - Jonathan: They help their clients create a dream home for themselves.