



**Savvy systems**  
Finding the best alarm to fit your needs



**Movers and shakers**  
How to be proactive against natural disaster

**MEDIA PLANET**

September 2011

# SAFETY & SECURITY



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## CHALLENGES



**Creating a safe and secure working and living environment** is the responsibility of an entire community. It is time to rethink our individual roles in ensuring the wellbeing of all those around us.

# Are you being proactive?

“Be Prepared” has been the Scout’s Motto for over a century, but it should be the motto of all Canadians as well.

No one knows when an emergency situation could occur. A severe storm, a fire, a carbon monoxide leak, a home invasion or any other crisis could happen to anyone, at anytime. The best way to handle an emergency situation is to be prepared. Being proactive and planning ahead will ensure you, your family, and your workplace will have the tools and knowledge necessary to keep safe.

The Canada Safety Council believes in educating Canadians and providing them with the information they need to keep themselves safe in every aspect of their lives, whether it be at home, at work or at play.

## The three-day survival plan

**1** In the event of a natural disaster, Canadians should prepare to be self sufficient for a period of 72 hours. Preparing for an emergency is important and something the whole family can do. It can be as straight forward as

making your own survival kit, drafting up a family emergency plan, and becoming more informed. Ensure that your home has a working smoke alarm on each level of the house, and test it on a regular basis. It is also advisable to have a carbon monoxide detector outside all sleeping areas.

Protect yourself from crime and home invasion by securing your home and your surroundings. Clear lines of sight, good lighting and not leaving telltale signs that the house may be empty, go a long way in discouraging a perpetrator. Installing a home security system will also help in securing your home. Have a good sense of your surroundings including getting to know your neighbours and their habits. If you will be gone for the evening, leave lights on. If you will be gone for a few days, have a trusted friend or neighbour check in on your house and pick up mail.

## It can happen to anyone

**2** As Jack Smith, president of Canada Safety Council, points out, one of the more difficult things with safety preparedness is that many people believe

“Clear lines of sight, good lighting and not leaving telltale signs that the house may be empty go a long way in discouraging a perpetrator.”

ve mishaps only happen to the other guy. “You shouldn’t think this way, because mishaps can and do happen. Your best defence is to be prepared.” As proof of this, in the winter of 2006, Smith’s house was broken into while visiting relatives over the Christmas holidays. Since then, he has installed a home security system.

Being prepared at home is an important part of good emergency planning, but preparedness does not stop at our doorsteps. Ensure that your workplace has a set of procedures in place to follow if an emergency were to arise. It is beneficial to go over these procedures on a regular basis, and inform new employees.

“Safety and security is not a part time job, rather it should be considered a full time practice that is engrained and not left to chance,” says Smith. “Take the time to prepare and educate yourself. In the event that an emergency should arise, you will be ready.”

**JACK SMITH**

President, Canada Safety Council  
editorial@mediaplanet.com

# Addressing a burning safety issue

**Fire safety may largely be a case of common sense prevention and logical execution, but B.C. officials are looking to keep educating the public on what they can do to avoid any serious fire hazards in their homes or businesses.**

Thousands of residential fires occur over the course of a year in the province, and an overwhelming majority are due to carelessness, but also because homeowners didn’t have working smoke alarms in operation at the time.

## Determining the hot spots

Dave Ferguson is the deputy fire commissioner at Emergency Management B.C., and his focus is on mitigating the

circumstances and scenarios that could lead to fires in residential homes and commercial workplaces.

“The kitchen has traditionally been a significant problem for us, primarily cooking and ensuring that elements are turned off, or that people are of sound mind when doing their cooking,” says Ferguson. “A number of fires in the kitchen have occurred when folks were intoxicated, and people in that state aren’t really thinking about proper fire safety, unfortunately.”

## Protecting the most vulnerable

He also cites the elderly as being at-risk for fire safety, particularly when it comes to smokers, as a number of fires broke out because of cigarette butts that weren’t properly put out and disposed

of.

Paper and plastic are two elements in abundant supply in any home or business, and both are easily capable of starting a fire if close enough to a heat source. Other combustibles in the home and office also abound, like carpeting, draperies, plastic laminate and upholstered furniture, among others.

## Staying clutter-free

“Living in smaller spaces creates storage issues for some, and combined with faulty wiring or a cheap extension cord, piling on combustible elements on top of that is asking for trouble,” he says. “Having a fire extinguisher in the home is a good thing to consider having, but only if it’s maintained and people are aware of how to use

it.”

Trying to hammer the message home, Ferguson says that young children have helped motivate their parents to act by working to prevent any fires from breaking out, as well as preparing a plan to escape should it ever happen.

“It’s a pretty sad reflection of our society that our best advocates for fire safety, particularly in the home, are through elementary school kids,” he says. “There have been a couple of real success stories of kids going home and insisting that the family have an escape plan, which ended up saving lives in those cases.”

**TED KRITSONIS**

Info courtesy of Dave Ferguson  
editorial@mediaplanet.com



## WE RECOMMEND



**Savvy systems**  
How to pick an alarm based on your needs.

PAGE 7

“Research companies and always get a minimum of three quotes.”

## Securing the workplace p. 5

Have an action plan to tackle any worst-case scenario.

## Disaster preparedness p. 7

If a natural disaster hit, would you be prepared?

# MEDIA PLANET

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## DON'T MISS!



Avoid the hot spot

**What’s the most dangerous room in the home when it comes to fires? According to the Canada Safety Council, it’s the kitchen—and most kitchen fires can be prevented.**

Above all, never, ever leave cooking unattended. Always turn off the heat as soon as the cooking is done. Built-up grease can easily catch fire, so clean your burner pans and stove top regularly.

What if grease catches fire in the kitchen? You should have a fire extinguisher nearby for this type of emergency, in addition to a working smoke alarm.

Never try to put a grease fire out with water. If possible, cover the pan with a close fitting lid to smother the flames; you may use baking soda on shallow grease fires.

**CANADA SAFETY COUNCIL**

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# INSPIRATION

When the Christensens hired their security company, they thought their alarm was there to protect them from intruders, not fire. **This service saved their home.**

## Fire alarms: An essential

### CHANGE

**We've heard it all before—that fire alarms save lives and protect property, but for the Christensens, a fire alarm meant the difference between a small fire and an inferno in their home.**

Two Christmases ago almost went up in flames for the Edmonton, Alberta family. On December 20, 2009, a minor fire started in their home. They could have lost everything, if not for the quick thinking and diligence of their home security services provider.

The episode began at breakfast time when the Christensens lit a candle with highly flammable ornamentation around it that had been made by their young son Aaryn. They placed the burning candle on a window sill in the dining room of their home.

Pamyla soon left for work, followed a little later by Bruce with the two children. He set the alarm as they left, but did not extinguish the candle, despite Pamyla's warning him to do so. "I felt awful about that pretty soon," he said.

An hour after leaving the house Bruce got a call from a friend who had been contacted by the alarm service. Bruce had missed a call from them on his cell phone and the company had contacted the friend who had been listed as a se-

condary contact to alert him that there had been multiple alarm triggers from the house.

He rushed home, to find two fire trucks and an ambulance parked outside his house. Hoses snaked through the front door and smoke everywhere..

"The firemen stopped me and confirmed who I was and that the house was empty. I told him that only our family pet was in the house. A few minutes later a fireman in full gear carried our feisty Siamese cat Simon from the basement. He was OK, and so was Simon!"

### Like a candle in the wind

It is likely that the candle burned down, setting the wooden window frame on fire. It then fell on to a hardwood floor that had some children's toys and papers on it. That the fire didn't get very big—about the size of a small campfire according to Pamyla—was due to the quick arrival of the fire team.

The inner pane of the window had broken and the house was full of smoke with plastic bits in it. Any minute, the outer pane of the window could have broken and oxygen from outside could have contributed to a much worse situation.

"Another five to 10 minutes and we wouldn't have had a house," Bruce said.

### Costly damage

The smoke wreaked a lot of damage, and repairs are still ongoing. Still, the Christensens were only out of their home for seven weeks. They had to replace the kids' bed frames, a computer desk and area rugs. Food and plastic containers were discarded, and the dry cleaning bill came to \$23,000. The total cost for repairs and replacing items is currently between \$75,000-\$90,000.

The most important thing was that they did not lose any loved ones, or valuable mementos.

"We had (the company) monitor our house so that I could sleep at night knowing that the family would have some protection from home invasion. We wanted to know beforehand if someone had broken into our home and was waiting inside. I didn't know that (the company) monitored our fire alarm until that day," Pamyla said.

Bruce tells nearly everyone he meets they should have a fire alarm at home, and someone monitoring it. He also recommends people make a video recording of their home and contents—in case what happened to him happens to someone else.

DAMIEN LYNCH

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### A FIRST-HAND ACCOUNT

"We had just moved into my new home which was prewired for a security system. We were leaving town the following week and decided to wait until we returned to have the alarm installed. We were urged to install the system by the service provider before we left. We were sure that our neighbourhood was safe, but the company convinced us to install the hardware anyway and allow them to monitor it while we were away. While we were away our new home was broken into.

Because we had set up our system prior to leaving, the company was able to dispatch the police to our home. They were also able to identify the exact window the burglars had breached. As a result, the police were able to stop the thieves before they made away with any of our possessions."

ANONYMOUS

Courtesy of Best Security  
editorial@mediaplanet.com

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INSPIRATION

**TIP**  
**2**  
**ENSURE ALL EMPLOYEES HAVE A SPECIFIC EMERGENCY TASK**

# CRACKING DOWN ON CRIME IN THE WORKPLACE

**!**  
**SECURE YOUR BUSINESS**

Having a business requires not just hard work, but plenty of peace of mind as well, and that's why these security recommendations should help bring you some.

**Physical exterior**  
 ■ Set up surveillance cameras at points of entry and exit.  
 ■ Consider using iron bars for lower floor windows that could otherwise be break-and-enter points for burglars.  
 ■ An alarm system should always be a part of any security setup for any business.  
 ■ Patrolling on foot can also prove useful in keeping outside interlopers at bay.

**Inventory control**  
 ■ Find the best way to manage your inventory, and use hidden cameras to keep tabs on high-profile stock areas, or visible cameras to mitigate shoplifting.  
 ■ Keep loading docks under tighter supervision to ensure that incoming inventory isn't replaced by stock that's unaccounted for.

**Pre-employment screening**  
 ■ As an employer, it behooves you to pre-screen employees and ensure that you are hiring people you can trust.

It's also important to ensure that any business security provider you potentially work with is experienced, accredited and a licensed service provider, like ASIS and CSIS, for example.

**TED KRITSONIS**  
 Info courtesy of Dan Popowich & Chris A. Young, Garda Security  
 editorial@mediaplanet.com

There are many steps businesses can take to help safeguard their business from armed robbery, break-and-enter, shoplifting and a variety of frauds. But once these measures, or training for staff, are put in place, businesses shouldn't assume the job is done.

"It's important for businesses to take proactive steps regularly," says RCMP Corporal Holly Marks, spokesperson for the Lower Mainland District Regional Police Service. "Business owners or managers should regularly meet with their staff, and review safety measures."

Cpl. Marks notes that in a retail environment, staff turnover can be high. "Unfortunately, our investigators see many instances where businesses have new staff, who haven't been trained in safety and security procedures, or staff who aren't even aware of these procedures."

Businesses may also want to contact their local RCMP detachment or police department directly, to talk about any security concerns.

"Many detachments have crime prevention officers available to conduct property security assessments and can offer suggestions on what businesses can do to avoid becoming a victim," Marks says.

She offers a number of tips and checklists for businesses:

**Armed Robbery Prevention**  
 Assign employee responsibilities such

- as:
- Who will call police?
  - Who will look for a getaway vehicle (if any) & direction of travel?
  - Who will lock the doors?
  - Who will detain & separate witnesses?
  - Who will protect evidence?
  - Do not assume these jobs will be done—make your staff assignments now.
  - Have some marked money in the register. Record the denomination, serial number, and year of several bills on a piece of paper kept separately from your till. Try to include this marked money with what the robber takes.
  - Surveillance cameras are a great deterrent.

- If Robbed...**
- CALL POLICE IMMEDIATELY.
  - DO NOT RESIST. Cooperate with the robber. Do not volunteer to do anything other than what is asked—he/she may be armed, or high on drugs.
  - Try to remain calm. You will be able to give a better description. Try to notice height, hairline, ears, scars, marks, tattoos, rings...
  - Give robber marked money (part of your pre-planning).
  - Preserve the scene for evidence—immediately lock all doors. Don't touch anything the robber may have. Ask all witnesses to remain on the scene and independently record their interpretation of events, including the robbers' description(s). Don't compare notes, just have everyone report what they



- saw.
- Note direction of travel and mode of transportation.

- Preventing Fraud**
- Keep the debit machine and pin pad off of the counter.
  - Check the credit card expiration date.
  - Check the name on the front of the credit card to be sure it matches the name on the signature panel.

- Do not accept credit card phone orders even with an obtained authorization number unless the customer will personally pick the order up and can produce the card for either electronic or manual card impression.
- Check signatures and ask for photo identification.

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## INSIGHT

**THE INTERIOR**

- Mark any valuable items for identification purposes and keep a detailed log of serial numbers
- Log your house and its belongings with video tape—it could aid in figuring out what has been taken should a burglary occur
- Lock any expensive items away that do not get used often—jewellery, watches
- Lock up doors and windows even when you are home.

**THE PROPERTY**

- Use motion detectors around back doors, garages, and hidden entrances.
- Don't leave tell-tale signs you are away—have mail picked up, have someone cut the grass or shovel the driveway in the winter, install light timers.
- Change your routine often—burglars often know the schedule of a neighbourhood
- Get to know your neighbours well—they can be a great resource when it comes to protecting your home when you're away.

**GET SECURE,  
INSIDE AND OUT****THE ENTRANCE**

- Do a general assessment—identify all the entrances.
- Make sure you have solid locks on all doors.
- Install a wide angle viewer in your front doors.
- When buying a new home, be sure to change the locks.
- Never open the door to strangers.

Information courtesy of RCMP Division E

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Harold &amp; Albert Price, 1935

Kevin, Bob &amp; Peggy Price, 2011



NEWS

**TIP**  
**3**  
**ASK FOR REFERENCES WHEN SELECTING AN ALARM SERVICE PROVIDER**



**A STRONG DETERRENT**  
Knowing a house is armed with an alarm is an effective way to encourage would-be-thieves to avoid your home.



DON'T MISS!



What you can do to prevent false alarms

**False alarms have been a hot topic lately and for good reason. They tax police resources and heighten pressure on authorities to manage first responder dispatches. This can result in changes to alarm by-laws and increased false alarm fines to residents.**

By working together, the general public, security professionals and police departments, can reduce false alarms.

Consumer error is the number one cause of false dispatches. A false dispatch occurs when an alarm system is set off, police are called, and there is no intruder or emergency situation.

Here are a few tips on how to make the best use of your security system by reducing false alarms:

**Ask for Enhanced Call Verification and provide multiple contacts.**

“Enhanced Call Verification”(used for burglar alarms only) means that your monitoring company will try to get in touch with two or more of your contacts to confirm your alarm’s validity before issuing a dispatch. Communities that require Enhanced Call Verification have seen reductions of unnecessary law enforcement response between 30 and 50 percent, according to the False Alarm Reduction Association.

**Maintain your “call list.”**

Keep your “call list” up to date with current phone numbers for you and your contacts. With the right contact information, monitoring stations can be proactive in determining if police should be dispatched to your home.

**Schedule annual inspections.**

Request annual maintenance inspections to ensure proper performance of your alarm system. Also, don’t forget to replace your back-up battery every three to five years.

**Properly train caretakers.**

Ensure all key holders are trained in the proper use of your alarm system and know your passcode and monitoring station’s number in case the alarm is accidentally set off. Never give a key to someone who isn’t familiar with the system.

**Monitor your home’s environment.**

After any household changes, such as remodelling, contact your alarm company to ensure they won’t affect your system. Plants or curtains that are too close to drafty areas or a new pet that enters an armed room can trigger an alarm.

TED KRITSONIS

info courtesy of Canadian Security Association  
editorial@mediaplanet.com

# Picking your best alarm system

**Question:** How do you know you’re getting a security system that fits your needs?  
**Answer:** By shopping around, doing your research, and being an informed consumer.

**There is no doubt that alarm systems, especially personal emergency response systems, can help save lives and prevent crime. However, finding the right alarm system can be a daunting process.**

With the constant advance of new technologies, alarm systems can be customized to meet almost every need and purpose. Homeowners must consider their income, age, family size, and any life safety devices that may also be required, such as medical alarms or carbon monoxide detectors. Overall, a security system should be customized to meet your requirements and budget. Here are some ways to help you find the right system for your needs.

**Identify your requirements**

Every home is different and therefore every alarm system should be too. Ask various alarm companies to provide you with an evaluation of your needs, based on your family members’ requirements and habits.

**Do your research**

Take time choosing an alarm system. Research companies and always get a minimum of three quotes. Discuss your needs with alarm companies that



“Research companies and always get a minimum of three quotes.”

JF Champagne  
Executive Director, Canadian Security Association

are members of reputable associations. When comparing companies, be sure to make a true comparison by thoroughly reviewing the types of products to be installed.

**Get references**

Ask for references from other customers. Find out how long the alarm company has been in business. Also, ask them to provide you with evidence of their expertise or training. For example, have their technicians completed any college courses or security installation

training programs?

**Ask questions**

Be an informed consumer. Ask questions until you understand what you are purchasing. Reputable companies should answer positively to most, if not all, of the following questions:

- Can I see proof that your company has all applicable provincial and municipal licences?
- Will you provide a written quotation and a contract once the system is purchased?

**CARBON MONOXIDE FACTS**

- **As the colder** weather starts to settle in, people use fuel-burning appliances more frequently in order to keep themselves warm. People need to be extremely vigilant when using these appliances to prevent deadly exposure to the serious hazards of carbon monoxide (CO).
- **Carbon monoxide** is often called the “silent killer”—its victims cannot see it, smell it or taste it.
- **Carbon monoxide** gas is produced by the incomplete burning of

fuels. It can be released by gas furnaces, hot water heaters, cars, fireplaces, wood stoves and kerosene heaters. Faulty burners or clogged chimneys are often part of the problem.

- **A carbon monoxide** detector is the best way to protect you and your family from this potentially deadly threat.

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# Plan for disaster, prepare for the worst

**The recent earthquake off the coast of Vancouver Island has renewed calls for better preparedness from B.C. residents in case a disaster of greater proportions hits the province.**

Speaking on behalf of the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Heather Lyle, director of Integrated Public Safety with Emergency Management B.C., says the ministry outlines a number of suggestions people can do to better prepare not just themselves, but also family members and friends, in case of a natural disaster.

**Talk about it with your family-**

Draw up a plan to act safely and decisively should an earthquake hit, and ensure that everyone understands their respective roles.

**Hazard assessment**

- Try to mitigate or eliminate the risk of heavy objects falling and injuring someone by securing them to the wall.
- **Doubly ensure** all evacuation routes are clear.
- **If someone** in the home is disabled, designate a “buddy” to assist him or her beforehand.

**What you should do to protect yourself during an earthquake?**

- **Drop, cover yourself, and hold on.**

- **Never try to flee** during an earthquake because it’s been proven the least safest method.

**Educate yourself and ask questions**

Is there a contingency plan in your office? Is there one at your school? It’s your responsibility to find out, so don’t be afraid to ask.

**Emergency Supply Kit**

- **It’s always** a good idea to stock essential supplies for up to one week.
- **These can include** good walking shoes, medication, important documents (like insurance and identification) and a small amount of cash.

**Listen for media instructions and bulletins**

- **Stay off the phone** as much as you can, and do not call 911 unless it is absolutely necessary.
- **If possible,** turn on the radio or television for news and instructions on what to do next.

**Educate**

Check out [shakeoutbc.ca](http://shakeoutbc.ca) to learn about the largest earthquake for all of B.C. on October 20.

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## Security Tips For Your Home

- Install sensor lights to reveal an intruder's presence outside of your dwelling
- Keep the shrubbery trimmed near your doors and windows so they are visible from the street
- Purchase timers to turn on lights when you are away at night
- Turn on a radio before you leave your home
- Secure exterior ladders
- Install proper deadbolt and window locks

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