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modernizing your home security

With technology evolving so rapidly and becoming more

affordable, homeowners should consider replacing their older equipment with a completely new security system, rather than patch together outdated units that provide specific functions in isolation. A modern system will wake you up in the morning to your own personalized display screen, adjust your room temperature, turn on your lights and operate other household functions. When you leave the house, wireless technology will allow you to watch your property, both inside and out, through your personal digital assistant (PDA). This means you can also program household functions from afar. Of course, an online security sentry will ensure no-one else can access your system.

Now and in the Future

These newer residential security systems can coordinate a wide range of functions by remote control, from locking windows and closing the garage door to adjusting the thermostat, drapery and lighting. They can even notify you if a room has been entered or a cabinet has been opened. Commercial-type closed-circuit television cameras (CCTV) with live video feed are also being introduced to residential systems in many average-sized homes. In addition, these modern systems coordinate driveway and doorway cameras (connected to your home computer or TV), monitor for break-ins, provide smoke, fire and CO₂ detection, and include water sensors for the detection of a burst pipe, leaking water tank or an overflowing tub.

In the near future, residential video surveillance will distinguish pets from people, and even burglars from letter carriers. The latest CCTV cameras can identify intruders using motion or heat sensors or even activity pattern recognition (e.g. climbing a fence, or jimmying a lock).

System Monitoring

These all-in-one sentry/security systems are becoming more and more reliable, with many built-in failsafe features designed to ensure 24/7 protection, comfort and convenience. But no system is infallible, so do not assume that the simplicity of operating the systems means they are foolproof. Often, the easier a system is to operate, the more complex it actually is - and therefore it is even more important that it be installed and tested by a professional who can ensure that all aspects are suitable for your home, and remain problem free. Follow your maintenance guide for regular diagnostics and servicing, and be mindful of some of the more common reasons for security system weakness or failure:

1. Improper Installation

Many systems are designed for easy homeowner installation. However, if you aren't a handy person, get someone who is well versed in the procedures to ensure it is done properly. There is too much at risk to allow compromise.

2. Incorrect Programming

Make sure you understand the specific threats that your system is designed to monitor. Sometimes homeowners make mistakes, such as assuming that monitoring smoke detection includes CO₂ detection, when in fact these are two different sensor types.

3. Incompatible or Malfunctioning Equipment

Integration is essential. If your system doesn't have a self-monitoring function, or if it's a hybrid of different components, you must determine how to check each function for failure, and do so regularly.

4. Vulnerability to Tampering

Never underestimate the possibility of someone tampering with your security system. If a stranger disconnects or deprograms one of your system's functions, you and your home will be vulnerable to a future robbery or invasion.

maintaining exterior siding

Siding can be a very attractive exterior finish with a practical function. Here are a few details you should know about cleaning and repairing various types of siding:

Wood

Avoid using a power wash with excessively high pressure. The pressure can chip off paint or stain and also damage the wood. To get rid of mildew, ask your hardware merchant for a mild multipurpose cleaner. Always be careful not to allow soap or water to get behind the siding boards. To help keep water from this area, all hosing or washing should be from the top down, similar to a rainstorm.

Vinyl

When washing vinyl, be careful not to allow soap or water to get under the horizontal panels. If water gets inside the ventilation/drip holes underneath, it could damage your insulation or compromise your moisture barrier.

Aluminum

Sometimes excessive chalking may appear on the surface of painted siding. This is actually a normal process as the paint matures. The chalk protects the siding color while it is exposed to the sun. Excessive chalking may indicate a poorly mixed paint formula, but a gentle wipe should keep it under control.

"best before" alarm

Every spring and fall, residents are reminded to check and replace the batteries in their smoke alarms and CO₂ detectors. This is a good practice, and since it is tied to a regular calendar event, is easy to remember. Another less common but equally important thing to remember is to check the expiry date (if any) on your alarm units. These detectors have chemical strips or chambers that react to gases. These mechanisms can break down over time. If your smoke or carbon monoxide detector is over five years old, consider replacing it. For more information, check with your local fire department, or contact the warranty department for the unit. When you do get a new unit, be sure the replacement year is clearly marked, so you can check it as part of your spring and fall season battery changes.

Steel

Pre-finished steel siding is usually very durable, and often installed in sheets. If sheets are installed correctly, you will not need to be overly concerned about moisture finding its way behind the panels. However, to be safe, you should always be mindful of where the panels join, and avoid excessive water pressure in these areas.

Think, Act... Live!

"The things that one most wants to do are the things that are probably most worth doing."

Winifred Holtby

"To accomplish great things, we must dream as well as act."

Anatole France

"Change your thoughts and you change your world."

Norman Vincent Peale

"A discovery is said to be an accident meeting a prepared mind."

Albert Szent-Gyorgyi

Spring Ahead!



The calendar pages are quickly flying by, and as each day passes we are reminded that we must start making plans for the rest of the year. Maybe you've been thinking about a home renovation or a major vacation. Whatever you want to do in the coming months, now is the right time to get a head start. If I can be of any assistance in moving your plans forward, please don't hesitate to call.

If you want up-to-date statistical data for your street and area, please call.

Call Millie Lloyd today for all your Real Estate needs.
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