



**THE**  
**8** **ESSENTIAL**  
**QUESTIONS**  
**TO ASK YOUR SECURITY COMPANY**  
**BEFORE YOU SIGN UP**





# WHAT TO ASK A SECURITY COMPANY BEFORE SIGNING UP FOR SERVICE

About 30% of all private homes have a security system. Most systems are purchased when a family purchases a new home or after they've been burglarized. In these situations, the process can feel hurried and stressful, but having an alarm system installed can greatly increase the safety of your home and family. Just like any other investment, it is important to do your due diligence and research your options before making a purchase. A home alarm and monitoring system can come with many different features and add-ons, and no two companies offer the same products or services. It is important to put some thought into what will suit your family's needs best. To take some of the stress out of finding the right services and company for you, Fortress Security has put together a list of important questions to ask an alarm company before you make the purchase.



## **1. WHAT BRAND OF EQUIPMENT WILL YOUR COMPANY INSTALL IN MY HOUSE? ONCE IT IS INSTALLED, DO I OWN THE EQUIPMENT OR DO YOU?**

Alarm system companies do not make the equipment they install; they primarily focus on customer service and security monitoring. It is important to research the products an alarm system company carries. Some security equipment manufacturers are better than others, and not all manufactures make the best security equipment.

According to [alarmsystemreports.com](http://alarmsystemreports.com), the top two equipment manufacturers are Honeywell and GE Security. If the alarm system company carries a different product line than either of these, it is a good idea to do some research on the products before committing. Most alarm system companies give you the option to own or lease the equipment installed. Owning the equipment is a better choice than leasing the equipment. If you own the equipment and are not happy with the current security company, you can keep it and transfer the security monitoring to another company. Fortress Security installs top-of-the-line Honeywell equipment.

## **2. HOW LONG HAS YOUR COMPANY BEEN IN OPERATION?**

With time comes experience, the longer the company has been in business, the better.. If you are having a complex system installed, you want a company who has been in the industry for a good while. In addition to years of experience, a reputable company should be affiliated with an industry association, such as the National Burglar and Fire Alarm Association. It is also a good idea to check the Better Business Bureau for complaints against the company. Fortress Security, for example, has been keeping Texas homes safe since 2001.

## **3. ARE YOUR INSTALLERS EMPLOYEES, AND ARE THEY CERTIFIED?**

Security system installation technicians in Texas must pass an FBI, Texas DPS, and a general background check run by the employer. In addition to these background checks, security system installation technicians must complete a variety of safety checks. If hired, a security company employee must maintain a current registration with the state. Adversely, sub-contractors installing equipment are not thoroughly vetted like a permanent security system employees. All of Fortress Security's techs are background checked employees that we trust in our homes, as well as with the security of our customers.

## **4. DO YOU SELL "DIY" SYSTEMS?**

Consumers should be skeptical of systems sold as a "do-it-yourself" systems. No government arm regulates or sets standards for the alarm industry, except for commercial fire systems. Many companies out there are selling unsafe DIY systems that could be easily be hacked by anyone with a little knowledge and a CB radio if installed incorrectly. Using a reputable company that has reliable, safe equipment will increase the safety of your home and family. Fortress Security installs Honeywell products, which are one of the highest rated home security systems.



## **5. WHAT KIND OF MONITORING DO YOU OFFER? IS IT 24/7 AND UL LISTED?**

A company providing 24/7 and UL-listed monitoring will offer the safest, most reliable system monitoring. UL is an American global safety consulting and certification company that provides safety-related certification, validation, testing, inspection, auditing, advising and training services to a wide range of clients, including home security system providers. In addition to 24/7 and UL-listed monitoring, look for a company that is "5 Diamond" rated, meaning they have been proven to offer the highest level of customer service and have highly trained employees. Fortress Security has the nation's largest network of monitoring centers ensuring that our customers receive a faster emergency response. Our monitoring centers are UL-listed and equipped with the latest telephone, computer, and redundant backup power systems available today to guarantee that our services are never interrupted.

## **6. WHAT IS YOUR COMPANY'S AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME TO ALARMS?**

An average alarm response time of 60 seconds or less is ideal. When researching which company is best for you, ask for them to share this information. Fortress Security has an average of 60 seconds.

## **7. HOW OFTEN DO YOU TEST YOUR SYSTEMS?**

Home security systems should receive regular tests to ensure that they are working properly. At a minimum, these tests should be conducted once per month. Fortress Security sets their systems to self-test hourly, weekly or monthly depending on the system type.

## **8. DO YOU OFFER A SECURITY SYSTEM WITH ADVANCED SAFETY FEATURES?**

Home security technology is rapidly evolving. Some more advanced features that security systems can include are remote access, cellular monitoring, video services and video verification, and a security app option. Remote access allows you to disarm or arm your system from a smartphone, tablet, or laptop. You can receive texts or emails when any part of your system is triggered by a window or door sensor. Cellular monitoring is when a cell signal is used to connect an alarm system, so it does not rely on a telephone line or broadband internet connection. Your alarm will not be disabled by even the most tech-savvy burglar.

Video services allow you to view the video feed from security cameras from a smartphone web-enabled device. There is even an option called video verification that sends a video clip to the monitoring center when the alarm is tripped. This can lead to faster response time to for the police since there is proof of someone entering the house, not just a false alarm. It is important to be able to add on features you want for your alarm system. Securing your home should not be one size fit all.