



**Columbus, Ohio – Dec. 23, 2010 – As you prepare for the holidays and those New Year’s Eve resolutions, keep your home and family’s safety at the top of the list.**

**This time of year is an active one for those looking to take both your property and your feeling of security. The Electronic Security Association of Ohio (ESA of Ohio) recommends that homeowners take precautions to help deter would-be thieves with these four steps.**

**Step 1: Discourage the thief by lowering your home’s appeal. Create the illusion that someone is home by leaving on lights and a radio or television or using timers. Be sure to lock all of the doors. During the holiday season, don’t invite burglars in with holiday gifts that can be seen from the outside. If you have a home security system, turn it on and test the system at least once a week to make sure it’s working.**

**Step 2: Deny easy access by increasing the time a burglar would have to spend breaking in. According to industry research, burglars spend no more than 60 seconds breaking into a home; so making your home less accessible may cause an intruder to reconsider your house as a target. In addition to locking all doors and windows, and securing the garage door, consider trimming your trees and hedges. With fewer hiding places and other deterrents, a thief will think twice before selecting your home.**

**Step 3: Manage the risk by asking your neighbors, friends or local police to keep an eye on your property if you’re going to be gone for an extended time. For extended vacations, consider a house sitter and telling your local police when you will be away. Consider a neighborhood watch program for added security.**

**Step 4: Detect an intruder is the final layer of protection. The ESA of Ohio recommends investing in a home security system since homes without them are about three times more likely to be broken into than homes with security systems. In an industry survey of 1,000 public safety officials, 85 percent of police chiefs said security systems lower the chances a home will be burglarized. Almost 90 percent felt security systems raised their chances of catching burglars. A [recent study](#) conducted by the Rutgers School of Criminal Justice confirms this belief.**

**Before investing in a home security system, the association also recommends this checklist developed by the national Electronic Security Association:**

- **Ask your insurance agent, friends, family or neighbors for referrals.**

- Visit the ESA website for a list of member companies throughout the United States who have agreed to abide by the National Code of Ethics. In Ohio, consumers may visit the ESA of Ohio website at [www.secureohio.org](http://www.secureohio.org).
- Call several companies and ask if their employees are trained and/or certified by a nationally recognized entity like the ESA's National Training School.
- Ask the companies for proof of applicable state and/or local licenses.
- Ask the companies if they conduct any pre-employment screening (i.e. drug test and/or background checks).
- Contact your local police department's Crime Prevention Department; state licensing agencies; Consumer Protection Agencies; and the Better Business Bureau regarding any past interactions with, or history on, the perspective security companies.
- After you've narrowed the field to three or four alarm companies, ask for the name of the person who will call on you.
- When he/she visits, ask to see some company identification.
- Ask each alarm company representative for an inspection, recommendation and a quote in writing. Use a checklist to compare different packages and price quotes.
- Never feel pressured to sign anything. Be cautious of those who push you to sign a contract quickly or who may be offering unusual deals or incentives.