

ALARMS

24/7

Your Intruder Alarm Buyers' Guide

Need an Intruder Alarm to protect your Home or Business?



15 critical things you must know about Intruder Alarms in order to avoid expensive mistakes and ensure you are protecting your property correctly!

Welcome To Your Essential Guide

Thank you for downloading this essential guide to Intruder Alarms. We know from our experience how choosing the correct Intruder Alarm for your home or business can be a bit daunting, from assessing why you need one, to which type of system you require and choosing the right company to fit it. But with the right guidance, coupled with a reliable competent company that provides excellent service, the whole process can be made a lot easier and less time consuming than you might think.

Which is exactly why we created this FREE guide for you.

This guide will give you the best advice and help you to gain the essential knowledge required in order to choose the right system and the right company. This will help you avoid any expensive mistakes, saving you time and money, which you can spend on your own business. At Alarms 24/7 we want to make sure you can take your next steps with confidence. That's why our guide has been created with the benefit of many years of experience and valuable industry knowledge and it only contains factual information so you can make your own independent informed choice and avoid those costly mistakes. And of course should you have any further questions, or require specific guidance in any area of security please call our friendly team on **01 8080808** or email us at info@alarms247.ie and we will be happy to help you.



15 critical things you must know about Intruder Alarms in order to avoid expensive mistakes and ensure you are protecting your home or business premises correctly!

Where do I start?

So you are considering investing in an Intruder Alarm to protect your home or business premises, but how do you know which system to choose?

There are many systems out there, all that fit a different need. So how do you choose the right one and what factors do you need to consider?

First of all you should ask yourself the following questions:

1. What do I want out of an Intruder Alarm?
2. What type of system do I need?
3. What influences the type of system I need?
4. Do I have to comply with any European Standards and regulations ?
5. How do I choose the best company?
6. What do I need to do once the system is fitted?

It is also important to understand that an Intruder Alarm is not a solution to all your security concerns, but should be part of an overall security solution.

In this comprehensive guide we will show you:

- How to know which system you need
- How to get the correct quote
- The importance of choosing the right company
- The importance of proving competence
- The different types of Intruder Alarms available
- The European Standards that apply (EN50131-7)
- Handover and certification requirements
- Your responsibilities
- Maintenance information
- The importance of warranties for your new system
- Why ongoing support is vital

1 | Basic Security Protection

You need to determine why you need an Intruder Alarm System. Is it an insurance requirement? Maybe your home or business is in a high risk area or your type of business means you are at greater risk of break ins. Factors such as access and exits to the building, security lighting should be considered as well when considering installing an intruder alarm system.

The main thing before you set off getting quotes is to determine why you need an Intruder Alarm and if so what type. The areas that require cover, who will operate it and times of operation will also need consideration. This will help in making sure you get the correct system installed suited to your business needs.



Installing an Intruder Alarm has a number of benefits:

- 1 - Extra peace of mind out of business hours.
- 2 - Monitored Intruder Alarms provide a remote response 365/24/7.
- 3 - May reduce insurance premiums.

2 | Where Do I Begin?

Once you've decided why you need an Intruder Alarm you then need to assess which entry points and areas you wish to have covered. This will then identify exactly where detectors should be sited in order to provide the best security coverage. It is beneficial to have your site surveyed professionally by an Intruder Alarm Systems expert. They will consider your requirements and produce a plan of exactly how your Intruder Alarm and detectors should be installed to fit your specifications. They will also look at risk and carry out a risk assessment that will look at:

- 1- The likelihood of theft ?
- 2- The ease of disposal ?
- 3- The value of goods etc? You will need to take into consideration what you want the system to achieve and then you can be advised on the best way of achieving your aims.

3 | How Do I Choose The Right Company?

Selecting the right company to design, install and maintain your Intruder Alarm System is an extremely important decision and one that should not be taken lightly. Having an Intruder Alarm System fitted to your building can be a major task, due to wiring, drilling and access required. If not carried out correctly this can cause a major inconvenience to your organization.

Therefore, choosing the right Intruder Alarm System company can make the whole process go smoothly, efficiently and with the least amount of disruption to you and your business.

However, making the wrong choice could mean you waste thousands of euros on the wrong system and/or end up with bad workmanship, delays and interruption to you. Worse still, you are at risk from security breaches while you are unprotected.

So, how do you decide on which company to appoint to install your Intruder Alarm System? Here are some very important considerations you should make before deciding on your choice:

A) Can they prove their competence?

All Alarm / CCTV and Access control installations must have a Private Security A Licence (PSA). It is the law by not having one can lead to fines and or imprisonment to both the installation company and the end user.

Anyone can say they are competent but the only way to ensure you are employing a competent company is by using someone who is part of a registered inspectorate scheme such as the "E Q A " (EQA). EQA, under their Code of Practice, will inspect a registered company to ensure they are installing and maintaining Intruder Alarm Systems to a recognized standard.

They also check a number of other requirements such as insurance, quality control, and performance to codes of Installing an Intruder Alarm has a number of benefits:

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B) Do they carry the right level of insurance?

In the unfortunate event of an accident occurring during the installation process you want to ensure there are no repercussions for you as a business and that any accident, injury or damage will be covered by the appropriate insurance policy.

It is the security system company's responsibility to ensure that insurance is in place to cover you. As a minimum any responsible security systems company should have the following:

- Employers' liability - to ensure their staff are covered
- Public liability - to ensure any damage/injury to clients and their property are covered
- Efficacy - failure of system to operate any EQA approved company will need this as part of their membership. For any unapproved company you should ask to see this information by way of their certificate.

C) Do they provide a warranty?

The single most important question to ask yourself is what will happen if something goes wrong after my system has been fitted?

"Once your system has been fitted you want to ensure someone is there to guarantee its operation for at least the next 12 months if not more. Any professional security systems company will guarantee their work for a minimum of 12 months so it is essential you ask this question and get it in writing.

D) Do they provide a list of people in the organisation?

You need to know whom you are dealing with when you place your order, especially if something goes wrong! A quality company who is fully transparent in their dealings with you

E) Can they provide testimonials of their work?

Any quality security systems company will have had great feedback from their clients and will be proud to have it in writing. Be very wary of any company who have not had this feedback or cannot be bothered to show how proud they are of their customer comments.

F) Do they provide Case Studies of work completed?

As with testimonials any security systems contractor worth their salt will have case studies of jobs where they have carried out prestigious and complex work or jobs they are proud to have installed to the customers satisfaction.

G) Do they employ all their own staff and are they trained?

will provide all details including contact numbers of the key people in that organisation - from your Installation Manager to your Service Co-coordinator, right up to the Managing Director.

You may never need to know all these people at the beginning of your relationship but it is essential to know you have a team of real people who are waiting there to help.



4 | Types of Intruder Alarm Systems

There are two main different types of Intruder Alarm Systems, which operate differently and provide different benefits.

WIRED SYSTEM

A wired intruder alarm system is the most common, and usually cheapest, type of system available. As well as a main control panel, additional detection is required which can take the form of door contacts, movement sensors, panic alarms, break glass sensors and many more.

WIRELESS SYSTEM

The disruption of wiring installation would cause Temporary installations Buildings where an intruder alarm is needed quickly.

Installing a wireless system is much quicker than a wired system - the average detector takes 5 minutes to install as compared with 4-6 hours for a wired system.

5 | Signaling

BELLS ONLY

This is the most basic option of intruder alarm systems. If the system is triggered, an audible alarm sounds to alert that an intruder has entered, or is trying to enter, the premises. This can be suited to premises in high-density areas (such as housing estates) where the alarm may be responded to by others, the police or neighbours.

MONITORED SYSTEM

A monitored system allows for two different types of response. Either a nominated key holder can be alerted, or the signal is sent to an ARC (Alarm Receiving Centre). Depending on the arrangement, the ARC will then either alert the key holder or initiate a police or guard response. Police will only respond to confirmed alarms, where different types of detection have been activated.

6 | Intruder Alarm Grading

Different types of intruder alarm systems are graded to determine the level of protection in place, the grading starts from 1 through to 4. Your insurer will specify which grade they require, or if you require advice on grading our consultants will advise you on the level required. The grades are based on resilience to attack and compromise, performance and design of the systems and products installed.

A wireless system is exactly the same as a wired system but detection is relayed to the control panel via radio. Wireless intruder alarms are most suited to the following applications:

Grade 1 – Low Risk

Intruders are expected to have little knowledge and tools to compromise the system. Assured Fire and Security do not install these systems

Grade 2 – Medium Risk

Thieves are expected to have an interest as the property will have items of significant value; therefore intruders are expected to have limited knowledge and tools to compromise the system. Remote monitoring of the system is an option, certain build quality is enforced along with design requirements such as 500 event memory log. Applications – household and low risk commercial

Grade 3 – Medium Risk

Thieves are expected to have a high interest as the property will have items of high value, therefore intruders are expected to have knowledge and a full range of tools to compromise the system. Remote monitoring should be installed and have 2 paths of signaling, normally one by landline and the other by radio for back up. Detection should be able to pick up masking or covering of the unit. Applications – Commercial and high value properties.

Grade 4 – High Risk

Thieves are expected to have a high interest in the property and are likely to be sophisticated in their planning of attack and theft, they would be expected to fully plan any intrusion and are expected to have sophisticated knowledge and tools to compromise the system. Similarities with grades 3 systems are in place and in addition detectors should be able to sense a reduction in range of the detector. Applications – Banks, Museums, Art Galleries

7 | Types of Detection

Door/Window Contacts

These contacts can be fitted to almost all types of door or window where unauthorized entry is a risk. When the intruder alarm is set, the device will signal to the control panel once the door or window is opened.



MOTION SENSORS

These sensors are installed to provide additional detection for the intruder alarm. These sensors can be one of 3 types: Standard PIR (passive infrared) sensors, which measure infrared light radiating from objects in its field of view. Dual Tec sensors which measure both infrared light and microwaves. These sensors provide an excellent detection rate and high immunity to false alarms and reduced call out costs. Sequential sensors which feature two non-overlapping detectors in one device.



PANIC ALARMS

Single push panic alarms can be wall or desk mounted. These alarms can be set to be silent or sound the intruder alarm system. In both circumstances, activating the panic alarm will activate the intruder alarm and trigger the consequential action.



GLASSBREAK DETECTORS

Using microphones and Time-Of-Arrival (TOA) processing, the detector listens only for the sound of breaking glass arriving from the protected area, and ignores sounds arriving from elsewhere in the room. These detectors are usually mounted on the ceiling.



VIBRATION DETECTORS

These sensors detect movement and can be used on windows and doors, or on freestanding objects such as ATMs, vending machines and filing cabinets. Alarms, where different types of detection have been activated.



8 | Additional Features Sounders/ Strobes

Your intruder alarm system should be linked up to a sounder device and/or strobe. Several sounders can be linked to one intruder alarm system. A strobe can be surface mounted or be mounted within the alarm bell box housing. Strobes give off high intensity flashes to show which property the alarm is at.

SMOKE CLOAK

A Smoke Cloak system is connected to your intruder alarm system and upon detection of an intruder will inject a dense fog in the protected area making it virtually impossible to see, therefore making theft practically impossible.

REMOTE KEYPADS

Wireless keypads offer an easy and inexpensive way to connect a secondary keypad to your alarm system, providing the flexibility to set and unset your intruder alarm from anywhere in the building.



9 | Cost of Intruder Alarm Systems

The cost of your Intruder Alarm System will depend on a number of factors such as the size of your site, the number of control points and detectors needed, the type of system you choose etc. Although the initial cost is generally a capital cost to the business, it can be spread over a number of years.

You should also factor in the cost of one or two maintenance visits per year. There is little point in installing an Intruder Alarm System if it isn't kept in full working order - it could fail just when you need it most!

10 | Standards

The following standards are applicable to the installation and maintenance of intruder alarm systems:

EN 50131-7 - This is the number of a scheme document published by European Standards that details a number of standards that should be used together to achieve compliance as described above. The scheme includes standards for the system, its installation and maintenance and the components that make up the system.

EN 50131-1 specifies the requirements for Intrusion and Hold-up Alarm Systems (I&HAS) installed in buildings using specific or non-specific wired interconnections or wire-free interconnections.

DD 263 gives recommendations for the commissioning, on-site corrective and preventative maintenance, remote system checks and remote support of Intruder Alarms.

BS 8243 is the standard that defines the method by which alarms are considered to be "confirmed".

BS 8473 gives guidance on the management of intruder alarm systems, and the management of alarm conditions when they occur in order to reduce the nuisance factor and waste of resources in responding to false alarms.

BS 4737 provides recommendations for the planning, equipment and installation of intruder alarm systems in situations in which the balance of the system is located exterior to any premises.

11 | Garda Response & URNs

Garda response is available on intruder alarm systems of grade 2 and above. However, the Garda will only guarantee a response to confirmed alarm signals from systems which have been granted a police URN (unique reference number). A verified alarm signal is when at least two separate zones of the intruder alarm have been activated. Monitored systems can only be installed by certificated providers and must be subject to a maintenance agreement. Excess false alarms will jeopardize police response.

12 | Handover and Certification

It is essential that once the Intruder Alarm System is commissioned, the security engineer demonstrates how to use the system to the appropriate person in the organization. This will include how to operate the system and how to carry out basic maintenance.

Once the system is fully complete and the installation is finished then the design, installation and commissioning certificates should be handed over to the client, together with an EQA Certificate of Conformity.



13 | Ongoing Maintenance

Ongoing maintenance of the system by a competent approved (EQA or equivalent) security systems company should be carried out.

A contract should be signed by both parties to ensure everyone understands their responsibilities. This will ensure that the security systems company is legally obliged to carry out the work.

The contract should state to what standard the work is carried out, how often the tests are completed and what is included (call out and/or parts). Every contract should include a call out facility with a minimum response time (the standard is 8 hours) to ensure any emergency breakdowns are attended to quickly.

All Intruder Alarm Systems should have a preventative maintenance visit where tests are carried out to ensure the system operates at an optimum level and any failing parts are replaced before they cause a major malfunction.

These tests should be carried out annually.

14 | Warranty

Your system, when installed new, should carry a warranty of at least 12 months. It is important to determine with your supplier that this warranty includes labour as some companies (wrongly in our opinion) only include the parts.

This means you could have a valid warranty claim and have to pay more for the part to be fitted than the part is worth itself! It is also important to ensure whoever maintains the system is also the company that carries out any corrective works or work on the system, as this could invalidate your maintenance contract if someone else works on the system.

15 | Corrective Works & Ongoing Support

It is important to have any faulty parts corrected straight away, just as you would do with a DOE for a car. It is wise to keep the Intruder Alarm System up to date and working at its optimum level, as in the long term this is more cost effective than having call outs and emergency repairs at a later date. It also reduces the risk of a faulty part not operating correctly at the time when you need it the most.....when there is a security breach!

Your maintenance company should provide a quick turnaround written report of any equipment that fails the tests. This should state what has failed and the seriousness of the failure e.g. is it a non-compliance issue or is it just a recommendation.

If there is a delay between the failure of the part/system and the corrective works being carried out then a back up procedure should be put in place such as key only entry or a manned security presence. On average your new Intruder Alarm System should last around 5 - 10 years, depending on the volume of usage, before upgrades to the system will be needed. During this time things will break down and/or get damaged. There will be building changes, legislation and standard changes but if you correct these as they happen then you can be certain of a reliable and cost effective Intruder Alarm System.



Any Questions?

We hope you have found this guide useful and it has given you valuable information with inside knowledge that will enable you to purchase your new intruder alarm system with confidence.

The whole process centers around getting the right advice and guidance, ensuring you are compliant and that you know your responsibilities, working with dependable, reliable and trustworthy people to install a quality intruder alarm system and deliver excellent service.

The purpose of this guide is to provide you with independent advice on what you need to consider.

However, if you have any more questions or need more expert advice please contact us FREE on **1800 47 47 47** or email us at info@alarms247.ie and we can discuss your requirements in more detail.

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