

17 Questions to Ask Home Security System Providers Before Making a Purchase

If you're considering purchasing a monitored home security system, make an informed decision to get the best protection possible.



Today, more than ever, it's up to you to take proper precautions to keep your home safe. One of the easiest and most reliable ways to protect yourself is by having a home security system professionally installed. In fact, according to a [study by the University of North Carolina](#), 60 percent of burglars said that the presence of a home security system would cause them to seek another target.

There are many home security systems in the marketplace today.

Between understanding equipment specifications, service packages, contracts details, and all of the other customizations available, the selection process can be quite daunting. On top of that, not all home security providers are created equal.

Before you make your decision on which security company you'll do business with, take the time to get some important questions answered first. Here are the top 17 questions you should ask when interviewing potential home security providers.

1. IS YOUR COMPANY LICENSED?

This is one of the most important questions you can ask, because an alarm company that sells (at the buyer's home or business), installs, monitors, maintains, services, or responds to alarm systems or supervises such actions must be fully licensed for business by state and local governments. Don't just take their word for it. Follow up to confirm licensure.

2. DOES YOUR COMPANY BELONG TO A RECOGNIZED INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION?

A reputable home alarm company affiliates themselves with a local or national industry association, like the [National Burglar and Fire Alarm Association](#). Membership in an industry association means the alarm company has met specific standards and is less likely to be a "fly by night" firm. Again, be sure to confirm any memberships by contacting the association(s) yourself.

3. HOW LONG HAS YOUR COMPANY BEEN IN OPERATION?

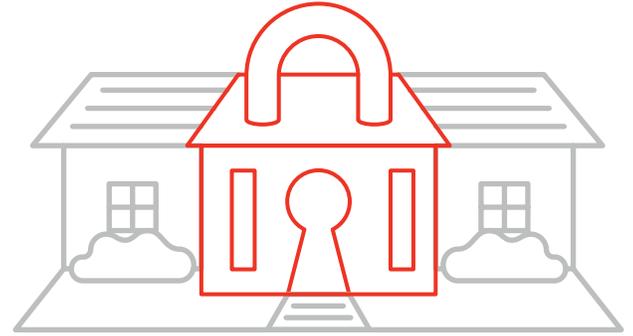
In home security, the length of time a company has been in business matters because it can speak to their level of experience. Finding a company that has a history of success in the industry can give you some added peace of mind.

4. WHO WILL BE INSTALLING THE EQUIPMENT?

Some companies hire subcontractors to perform equipment installations, and many don't. Some require that their service people undergo a thorough training program, others don't. In any case, you will want to work with a company that conducts background checks on employees and has only bonded individuals installing equipment. That way you can feel more confident about letting them into your home.

5. WHAT BRAND OF EQUIPMENT DO YOU USE?

Before you make a purchase, ask for information about the kind of equipment your system will include and have the security provider explain how it works. Then, do some research online to discover if the equipment has all of your desired security features and, perhaps more importantly, a verifiable history of reliability.



6. WHAT ENTRY POINTS ARE COVERED?

Every home is unique, and you may have specific needs or concerns. Find out how each of your home's entry points — including windows — will be protected. The types and quantities of sensors your home needs may incur additional costs, so be sure to get clarification on exactly what equipment is and isn't included in any plan offered.

7. IS THE EQUIPMENT LEASED OR WILL I OWN IT AFTER SOME TIME?

There are pros and cons to both leasing and owning your new alarm system. While there is no wrong answer to this question, it can help you to compare prices more accurately.

8. WILL THE SYSTEM BE WIRELESS OR HARDWIRED?

Wireless systems are more common today and often the preferred choice for many homeowners. However, you may have reason to prefer a hardwired system. Don't feel obligated to settle for one type over the other if you have a preference.

9. WHAT SUPPORT IS INCLUDED?

Many home security companies offer around-the-clock phone and technical support, but there are some that do not. Be sure to ask what happens if you need technical support, assistance with setting up your system, or just someone to answer your questions at 10 o'clock at night.

10. DOES THE QUOTED PRICE INCLUDE EVERYTHING?

A home security company may quote you a price for installation and monthly fees, and you'll want to clarify whether that price includes everything you'll need. Make sure charges include equipment fees, taxes, and any additional costs.

11. WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM YOUR HOME SECURITY PROVIDER IN AN EMERGENCY SITUATION?

If there is a break-in, fire, or any other emergency in your home, you will want to know what you can expect from your alarm company regarding actions and procedure. You'll want to understand how you will be alerted to any issues while you are away from home, as well as how they will help you if you are inside your home when trouble occurs. And don't forget to ask if and how your security alarm service will be impacted in the event of a power outage.

12. WHAT HAPPENS IN THE CASE OF A FALSE ALARM?

Monitored home security systems that are installed and maintained properly should not experience many false alarms. However, accidents do occur. Ask what the common causes of false alarms are, how to respond to them, and whether there will be any consequences or fines.

13. DO YOU OPERATE YOUR OWN MONITORING CENTER?

Not all home security companies have their own monitoring center or centers because they are costly to operate. For this reason, some subcontract their alarm monitoring to other alarm companies that do have their own monitoring centers. If you want the company that installed your alarm to do the monitoring, you will need to find out if they have their own monitoring center.

14. WHAT KIND OF WARRANTY DO YOU OFFER?

A reputable company should be willing to back up their product and service with a warranty. Find out what sort of guarantee is in place, and be sure to ask whether just the equipment is covered, or if installation and repair are also included.

15. IS THERE A CONTRACT?

Many home security providers operate on a contractual basis, but not all. That's why it's important to ask, and ensure that the terms of service are clearly explained. Ask to see the actual contract if applicable.

16. WILL INSTALLING A SECURITY SYSTEM REDUCE INSURANCE RATES?

In some cases, the installation of a home security system can grant you a discount on your home insurance. Your insurance provider will be the final word on this topic, but a good home security alarm provider will be aware of potential discounts and will help you earn them.

17. WHAT HAPPENS IF I MOVE?

Some companies will allow you to move with your system and maintain the current contract agreement, but not all. Most providers will have specific policy and procedures regarding customer relocations. But the details may differ, so it's important to get clarity on this point.



Choose with confidence

We hope this guide has provided you with the information you need to help you confidently evaluate home security providers.

We know that protecting your home and family is your top priority. It's ours, too. Contact us, and we'll show you how Bay Alarm can take home security off your worry list. Visit us at bayalarm.com to get your free, custom quote, or call 1.800.610.1000.