

# Buy Wisely

Many people buy burglar alarms in a hurry having suffered a burglary or attempted burglary and therefore end up making a poor purchase decision. Whether or not you are in that position the following quick guide will help you avoid the main traps and pitfalls when purchasing your alarm.

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*Pet-friendly alarms - Snowy and Harvey are protected by GuardHome  
Your pets can be protected too.*



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## 1. Have a proper survey and demo

Any reputable alarm company must carry out a proper inspection. Look for the NSI (National Security Inspectorate) accreditation [www.nsi.org.uk](http://www.nsi.org.uk) – see logo as displayed on our Home Page. If you need the alarm fitted for insurance purposes then only accredited alarm installers (e.g. NSI) are recognised.

Even so, inspections vary so make sure the person doing the inspection takes the trouble to ask you about your circumstances, lifestyle etc so all factors are covered. Be wary of any salesman who recommends a system without properly inspecting the premises or asking many questions. At GuardHome our assessment is based on a method for identifying all customer requirements.

It's also useful to have a demonstration of the system you are being offered. If the alarm is too troublesome or fiddly to operate you may be tempted not to turn it on if you pop out for 5 minutes – and then come back to a burgled house. GuardHome's alarms are operated by key fobs, like the ones used on modern cars so it couldn't be easier. **Modern alarm systems often have other useful features, such as the ability to set up notification by phone if the alarm is triggered.** The demonstration should cover any such points.



Key Fob

## 2. Find out exactly what you get and exactly what you pay

You probably know that some manufacturers of computer printers make their money not on the sale of the printers but on the sale of the ink cartridges. Suppliers of burglar alarms sometimes do something similar which is bordering on deception. They sell the system at what seems a competitive price but lock you into a long term maintenance contract that you have little control over but which can become expensive. **So, what you really need to consider is what is called “the cost of ownership”** – in other words not just what it costs to buy but also what it costs to keep. At GuardHome we fix the



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price of the annual maintenance when you buy the alarm (some firms put you on direct debit with automatic annual increases) and we don't lock you into an agreement.

One significant factor is the cost of maintenance services. Make sure you are not sold services you don't need. For example, some alarm suppliers operate their own ARCs (Alarm Receiving Centres) that are alerted by phone when your alarm goes off. They are therefore eager to sell the service. You may not really need this or be able to use less expensive alternatives. For example, your own mobile phone could take alert calls instead if you use a GuardHome system.

Having got that key point out of the way here are some other things to consider.



Wireless Smoke Detector



Wireless Sensor

Expect to receive a proper written report and quotation that covers your particular property and needs. One size does not fit all when it comes to alarms. So when it comes to price comparisons be careful. It's more useful to understand what affects price. The more sensors you require the higher the cost but the size of house and number of rooms is not the only factor affecting this. If the survey was done properly you will have been able to make choices that ensure you only pay for what you really want.

It is reasonable for you to be given a fixed price that the installer sticks to. That's what we always do at GuardHome. **Watch out for any hidden extras such as consumables or on-site calls not being covered by the maintenance charges.** Also make sure that you gain ownership and control of what is installed – so you can move to another supplier if you wish.

Be very clear about every aspect of support and maintenance and what it will cost you. 24hr support is very useful and need not be excessively expensive. Find out exactly what is included and look out for any potential extras or uncontrolled price increases.



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## GuardHome Buy Wisely Guide For the Purchase of the Right Alarm System For You

There are other hidden costs to be watch out for. Of these by far the most significant is the cost of repair and redecoration after a wired alarm system is fitted. GuardHome only installs wireless alarm systems so this is also a hidden saving with our systems.

### 3. What to look for in a system

We must confess that at GuardHome we are biased because we prefer and therefore only install **wireless alarm systems**. But we believe there are so many compelling reasons for having a wireless alarm including...

- They are quicker to install
- Installation leave no mess from putting in wires to sensors – and therefore avoids re-decoration costs
- Sensors can be put in the best position rather than the position of the sensor being dictated by the difficulties or costs of wiring.
- Changes and additions can be made to the sensors and system with minimal disruption or cost. Indeed, it's relatively easy to take the system with you if you move house.
- External building such as home offices or shed can be included in the system as any other room because no wires have to laid down.
- Wireless key fobs can be used to operate the alarm

So why aren't all alarms wireless? Firms that have traditionally sold wired alarms have a vested interest in selling them and probably make significant money from installations. It's hard for them to switch.

There are other things to consider too. Of these, **easy of use has to come quite high on the list**. As mentioned earlier, if the system is difficult to use you may be tempted not to use it if you are in a hurry or only going out for a few minutes – which could have serious implications.

**Reliability is an issue.** At GuardHome we have never had a control panel fail. False alarms can happen to anyone as when, say, a large moth enters and some time later flies onto a sensor. But modern sensors are less likely to miss-trigger and wireless sensors are unlikely to be poorly positioned and therefore less likely to miss trigger. Indeed, at GuardHome we fit pet-friendly sensors as standard for residential installations so that dogs and cats can be at home with the alarm on.

**Detecting Fire and Carbon Monoxide.** It's worth checking whether the system you are being offered can also work with smoke detectors and CO. detectors. GuardHome's do and it's relatively inexpensive to add them in. A



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big benefit of including a smoke detector is that if it triggers while the house is unoccupied you will get to hear about it.

What value do you place on the life of your family? Obviously, spending less than £100 on wireless smoke detector is not going to be an issue.

#### **4. Insist on a profession installation**

Don't be tempted to install a DIY alarm system. Of course they are cheaper but it's false economy and you won't end up with proper protection or peace of mind.

For example, it is relatively simple for burglars to obtain and enter the access codes to these DIY systems – rendering them useless. We won't go into details here because we don't want to give anyone helpful burglary tips! Other likely faults with DIY systems include sensors that don't trigger correctly or which generate frequent false alarms. Also, DIY systems are not recognised by insurance companies or the police.

A professionally installed alarm will work effectively and reliably. It will be hard for any burglar to by-pass but more importantly will be a very big deterrent to a burglar.

If your insurance company requires you to have an alarm they'll insist on it being installed and maintained by an accredited installer (for good reason) and you'll only be able to link into alarm centres, including Police notification if your installation is certified.

At GuardHome we always follow up our installations with a proper check to make sure everything is working as you wish - and to answer any questions you have from using the system for a few days.

#### **5. Helpful and fair priced maintenance and support**

Maintenance costs were covered earlier (see 2 above) but it's worth repeating that you need to check very carefully exactly what is included in your maintenance agreement, whether there is a lock-in and if the price can be raised automatically while you are locked in. At GuardHome we have no lock-ins, no price hikes and no hidden extras.

But maintenance and support isn't just about price. Ask you prospective alarm supplier how they arrange maintenance visits and when they'll do call outs without charge. Having to wait around all day or even half a day for someone to call can be frustrating and time consuming. At GuardHome we



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respect your time and arrange timed appointments with you so you don't have to hang around. Also, if you have a genuine problem with your alarm we come out to see you – no ifs, no buts and no extra charges.

**You are now in a position to buy wisely and we hope you'll want to call us.**

**Just call 0800 822 3954 or email [info@guardhome.co.uk](mailto:info@guardhome.co.uk)**

**GuardHome systems are secure by design and installed with speed.**

**Remember**

- We install systems for home and business use.
- Our systems integrate all kinds of detectors and can provide home or office automation.
- We also supply CCTV systems that capture good quality images for easy identification and which have actually been used in the apprehension of criminals as a result.
- Our systems are pet friendly. The alarm can be on while you are out and your pets are in.
- It's easy to include outbuildings, stables, sheds, enclosures etc into the one wireless system.
- Our maintenance service is outstandingly good and fairly priced.
- We provide advice and guidance on all aspects of your security.
- We offer a FREE survey.

**Break-ins and burglaries are awful when they happens**

**For Complete Peace of Mind  
Have an Alarm System Professionally Installed**

**Buy Wisely – Buy from GuardHome**



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