

Security blanket: Advanced systems protect

BY MARY KLEMIC
At Home Editor

A security blanket isn't just for children. Homeowners are blanketing their residences with security, in the form of devices with advanced capabilities that are designed to meet specific needs.

"It is a booming industry right now," said Ronald Ross, president of Vigilante Security Alarm Systems, 27215 Southfield Road in Lathrup Village. "There's a tremendous amount of awareness, prices have come down."

By the end of this year, more than one in five U.S. homes will be electronically protected by either professionally installed or do-it-yourself security systems, according to JP Freeman & Co. of Newtown, Conn.

As examples of advanced systems, Vigilante offers motion detectors that are "pet proof," and alarms that aren't set off inadvertently by weather.

Alarms can give the alert for medical emergencies, fires and environmental conditions, such as cold temperatures affecting a furnace while residents are out of town for the winter.

Communication for the alarms has been improved, giving added protection to the phone lines it travels. Ameritech's Scan-Alert® is one way, notifying when a phone line is cut, tampered with or burned.

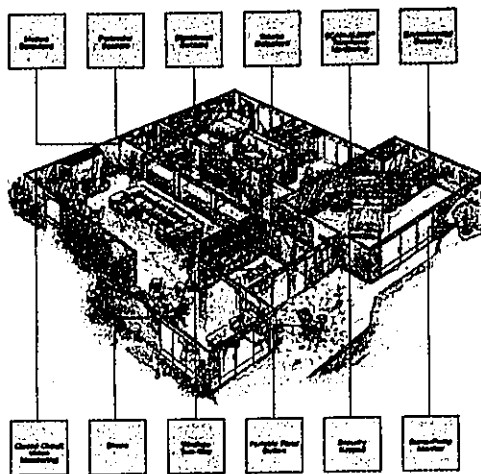
When selecting an alarm system, the equipment and the company are important to consider, Ross said.

Vigilante will ask potential customers what their specific concerns are. Also taken into consideration are the types of windows and type of home.

"Security is a state of mind."
"(We ask) 'What do you want? What is going to make you feel secure?'"

More than 85 percent of break-ins are through front doors, Ross said, so Vigilante secures the doors and offers motion detectors as back-up. Motion detectors cover areas 35 to 150 feet in size.

Vigilante alarms notify the central station, where



Security system: Pictured above (top) are the areas that can be covered with a modern security system. The bottom photo shows a team monitoring the system.

monitors are manned around the clock every day of the year. A monitor there even keeps track of weather systems.

"We don't believe in silent alarms. The intent is to drive the (intruder) out."

Other security items include access entry and control, in which a key fob is held up to a pad.

Call two or three companies before making a decision, and ask good questions, Ross advised.

For example, you should know whether the system is locally monitored, whether the equipment is owned or leased (if you lease the equipment, the company will remove it when you move, Ross said), and whether the company that provides the service also installs the system.

The company should be listed with Underwriters Laboratories,

and it is better if the firm is local, Ross said.

"You want service quickly."

Honeywell offers two new wireless home security systems, available at Sears at Livonia Mall. Homeowners can install the systems themselves.

Honeywell's Home Security System with Voice Management sounds an audible alarm, and has a voice dialer that can be programmed to call numbers you designate if the alarm is triggered.

"You can make a better and more intelligent choice on how to respond," said Kevin Krause, Honeywell project manager for consumer products.

It can also set lamps to go on or off at specified times, or whenever a door is opened, and can notify if an access code hasn't been entered by a specific time - telling that a child hasn't arrived home from school when expected, for example.

Honeywell's PC Managed Security Plus Total-Home® Control System enables the homeowner to operate security and automation control of lights through his or her personal computer.

"It's not 'Mission: Impossible' here."

"It's very easy to use. The basic kits can be easily set up in less than an hour."

The basic kit for the Wireless Home Security System with Voice Management includes a control panel, two door/window sensors, two adapters, two lighting modules, a key chain remote control, a telephone cord and a splitter jack. The kit for the PC system is similar, with software and PC connector cable.

Accessories allow you to customize, with such features as smoke sensors, and indoor and outdoor motion sensors. You can schedule your coffeepot to start in the morning, your air conditioner to start up before you return from work.

The computer software knows the exact time of sunrise and sunset every day of the year for every ZIP code, enabling you to program lights throughout the year at once.

"One guy has his toast pop up (through the system). To each his own."

Here are ways to make your home more secure

Vigilante Security Alarm Systems offers these tips for a more secure home:

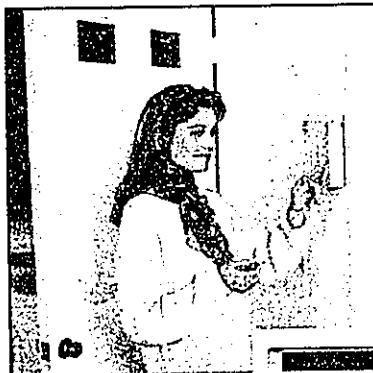
- If you go out for a short period of time, leave a radio on, tuned in to a talk show or all-news station. That way burglars will have a hard time deciding whether the voices are coming from a radio.

- Cut breaks in your shrubbery. Prune it so a burglar will find it difficult to hide behind.

- Keep house keys with you on a separate ring.

- Some police departments will make a point of checking your home while you're away. Notify them when you will be out of town.

- While you're out of town, leave a car in the driveway, if possible.



It's easy: Companies have made programming the security systems easier.

