



FSA - Keeping You Safe

How to Stay Safe When Using DIY Home Security

If you don't use a smart security system at home, you probably know someone who does. These systems are quick to install, easy to use and can make many people feel safer at home, but how secure are they really? Unfortunately, like most technology, home security systems are not immune to criminals and hacking threats. **Here's how to use your DIY home security system most effectively** and protect your home from burglars.

Home Security Systems

To get past most DIY home security systems, a criminal needs a certain amount of knowledge and equipment. According to Consumer Reports, burglars can use a portable radio frequency transceiver to block the motion detectors on your home, which allows them to get in – or out – without setting off your alarm. This type of attack is known as **jamming**, and technically can be used on any type of wireless device.

It's not a common method, but if someone has the skills and tools to pull it off, they could gain access to your home without triggering the alarm at all. In a study, Consumer Reports tested 10 popular home security systems and five of them were categorized as relatively easy to jam.

What You Can Do

To protect your home security system from jamming, avoid placing a sign in your yard that identifies the name of the system. While many homeowners place these signs to scare off would-be criminals, giving away too much information can leave you vulnerable to jamming attacks. The more a hacker knows about your system (for instance, the brand and type of system), the easier it is for them to get in. These signs generally can help to deter criminals, but be safe, keep them generic and don't specify which system you use.

Smart Doorbells

Many people use a smart doorbell to monitor their doorstep, discourage criminal activity and gain peace of mind. It's worth a reminder, however, that while these doorbell cameras can alert you to activity at your door, they are not full security systems. Like security systems, however, they can be vulnerable to hackers. For instance, a criminal may wish to gain access to your doorbell system's cameras to scope out your home for a robbery.

For more tips please visit the Florida Sheriffs Association's Crime Prevention Tips: flsheriffs.org/crime-prevention.

What You Can Do

To keep your smart doorbell system safe, update your password (or passcode) frequently. When available, set up two-step verification. Of course, you should never share your login information with anyone, including neighbors and friends.

In addition, it's a good practice to periodically delete old footage that has been saved on your app. That way, if someone does hack into your system, they have access to less information.

Back to Basics

DIY home security systems can be helpful tools, but you shouldn't rely on them 100 percent. When thinking about your home security, don't forget the "old school" practices that can help keep you – and your home – safer from criminals. For example, practice the 9 p.m. routine each night to complete tasks such as locking your doors, turning on exterior lights and removing valuables from your car. While nothing can completely deter burglars, there are simple (and free) tasks you can do to make yourself a more difficult target.

Call Your Local Sheriff

Thankfully, most burglars will not go as far as jamming to hack a home security system. They're going to look for the easiest way in, which usually doesn't involve high-level hacking. While you shouldn't live in fear of hackers, you should be vigilant in keeping up with good security practices. Update your passwords, keep your information safe, and if you see something suspicious, call your local sheriff's office to report it immediately.

Need to find your local sheriff's office? [Click here to access FSA's helpful directory.](#)