

Home Security Systems Traps & Tips

Trap Scenario

A well-dressed, door-to-door salesman knocked on Maggie's door offering to install a free home security system. All she had to do was agree to allow the company's sign to be posted on her lawn. Maggie had been thinking about getting a security system due to the recent break-ins. She was told she would be saving hundreds of dollars and signed the contract right away. After the installation, Maggie found exposed wiring in some of the rooms. When she read the contract, she was shocked to see that the basic \$45 monthly fee did not include the cost of monitoring services.

Tips

Here are some things to consider before purchasing a home security system:

- Typically, manufacturers of home security systems do not sell door-to-door
- Check with local law enforcement to see if a permit is required
- Burglar alarm systems are regulated by the Florida Department of Business & Professional Regulation and are required to be 18 years or older
- Agents must also pass a criminal background check, have no recent history of substance abuse, possess a valid photo ID with their name and address, and provide the license number of the electrical contractor responsible for the installation
- Think "scam" if the agent has a "van ready to install right now" or does not spend time assessing your home or reviewing your needs and available options
- Be suspect of "free" offers. Business are not charities. If they give something away, they will likely make up the cost somewhere else at your expense
- Service costs are usually built into the monthly monitoring fee
- Does the contract have a cancellation clause? What is the duration of the agreement, and does it renew automatically? Read the contract thoroughly and do not be rushed into making a bad decision because the salesman warns you that "this deal is only good for today."



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