

# Security

## Why I'm getting a Sonitrol alarm system

I admit it. I know absolutely nothing about alarm systems. Of course there are people in our company who do. However, since I am often asked personally to recommend a system, I thought I would educate myself a little. I first spoke to the gentleman at our company who heads the security division and he provided me with a great deal of technical information. To wake myself up from that informative conversation, I read the last column I wrote in *Our Toronto Free Press*. As many of my regular readers know, this is often a source of entertaining, informative and exciting journalism. As I did so, I read an advertisement for a company known as *Sonitrol*.

I called *Sonitrol* and was lucky enough to arrange an appointment to meet their Vice President, Joe Wilson. Joe sat me down in the company's Mississauga office and explained to me the difference between an alarm system and a *Sonitrol* system. I'm not one to lend my name to commercial products, but I've got to tell you, I was blown away.

*Sonitrol's* system is more than

access control and motion detectors. The system employs sophisticated audio and video-monitor-

Private  
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ing devices to detect breaches of security, at the first possible moment. The technology is so advanced, that the audio device is able to distinguish between the regular sounds of a business during the night and the abrupt or unusual sounds associated with an attempt to breach or a true breach

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of physical security.

When the system detects such sounds, *Sonitrol's* staff of trained listeners are alerted and they begin to monitor the sounds emanating from the secured premises. These

people have listened to thousands of calls and assisted by the electronic technology they are able to make an immediate assessment as to the breach. Joe was kind enough to play a recording from one such circumstance in which employees of a warehouse had hidden in the ceiling of a washroom in order to rob the facility after hours. On the tape, the first thing you hear is the creaking sound of the washroom door opening. Then you hear the voices of the would be robbers talking to each other, you even overhear their names. Of course the police are dispatched and they are armed with the information that they are probably dealing with store employees, with the names of the thieves and an ongoing commentary of where exactly they can be found in the building. Apparently, when the police arrived, the robbers tried to hide. The police immediately found one of them and once identified, the police asked him for the location of his accomplice by name. Imagine the robber's surprise!

As many of our business readers know, there is a problem with false

alarms generated from traditional alarm systems. In fact, many traditional systems have over a 98% false alarm rate. Needless to say, the police are almost as tired of responding to these alarms, as are the general managers of the companies who are roused from their sleep at four in the morning. According to Joe, the reverse is true in the case of *Sonitrol*. Their alarms are over 90% accurate, a fact that does not go unnoticed by law enforcement agencies. Not only are they able to gain the trust of the police, in terms of true alarms, but they are able to avoid the penalties that police departments have been assessing around the country for false alarms, which can be anywhere from \$50 to \$125. The company has many testimonial letters from corporate and industrial concerns, from happy managers who are obviously getting a little more sleep these days.

Another advantage of the system is the response time. Because the system is able to detect the burglars as they begin their attempt to enter the premises, they have a few

minutes lead-time on other systems, allowing the police to attend the site before the robbers make their escape. According to company statistics, the employment of their system has contributed to over 130,000 arrests since 1977.

Pricing for the system is competitive, but slightly more expensive than a traditional system. However, if you have property or information worth protecting, the bottom line is that the *Sonitrol* system is worth it.

Finally, the people at *Sonitrol* are true professionals. They are committed to client service and are extremely knowledgeable about not only alarm systems, but in the methods that many thieves have employed to circumvent them. This knowledge has been incorporated into their technology. And guess what?... I'm getting one.

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