

A security alarm is a system designed to detect intrusion – unauthorized entry – into a building or other area such as a home or school. Security alarms are used in residential, commercial, industrial, and military properties for protection against burglary (theft) or property damage, as well as personal protection against intruders. Security alarms in residential areas show a correlation with decreased theft. Car alarms likewise help protect vehicles and their contents. Prisons also use security systems for control of inmates.

Some alarm systems serve a single purpose of burglary protection; combination systems provide both fire and intrusion protection. Intrusion alarm systems may also be combined with closed-circuit television surveillance (CCTV) systems to automatically record the activities of intruders, and may interface to access control systems for electrically locked doors. Systems range from small, self-contained noisemakers, to complicated, multirally systems with computer monitoring and control. It may even include two-way voice which allows communication between the panel and Monitoring station.