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DSC SECURITY ALARM
END USER TESTING GUIDE

Security alarms are complex electronic systems and despite the best efforts, they can be broken, worn and torn, or even subverted by criminals if they aren't maintained and tested properly.

Why should I test my security alarm?
You do not use the important features of your security alarm every day so you typically will not know if they have stopped working. Therefore, if you don't test these features, they may not be working at all and you might have no idea!

There are several reasons your system might not be working, including but not limited to:

- One of the sensors might have worn out or accidentally been damaged.
- The central monitoring communication equipment might have been damaged, become defective, or monitoring service information might have accidentally changed.
- A power surge or brown-out might have damaged the electronics.
- Someone working on your house may have disconnected something without reconnecting it correctly.
- A criminal may have been in your house under other pretenses, such as a utility worker, and intentionally disabled part of your system so he could break in later, undetected.

There are two aspects of a security alarm that are most likely to stop working and therefore are the most important to test regularly:

1. The individual sensors that detect someone breaking in. You should test that each and every security alarm sensor is working properly on a regular basis. If a single sensor isn't working then that is a hole in your system that criminals can use to break in without being detected. It's quick and easy to test your sensors. The sensors are the most important parts of your system. Make 100% sure they work. If you're ever not sure, test them and make sure.
2. The communication from your security alarm to the central monitoring station. You should test that when an alarm occurs your system will properly alert the central station. If this communication isn't working and someone breaks in, then the siren will still sound but you'll never get a call from the central station and the police will never be dispatched. Your alarm system is likely setup for a regular 'self test' automatically but you should still test it yourself to be sure.

When should I test my security alarm?
At SimpTech Solutions, we recommend manually testing your system at least once a month. We also recommend testing your system whenever something happens that might make your system vulnerable.

Here are a few examples – but use common sense and apply this concept to your home, your system and your lifestyle:

- Test your security alarm immediately after any service/utility workers have been in your house to do anything. This includes the cable guy, appliance repair guys, the plumber, the electrician, the exterminator, painters, questionable family members and acquaintances, etc… Use this rule of thumb: If someone has just been in your house that you would not trust to leave alone with your kids, your cash or your most prized possessions then you should test your security alarm immediately after they leave. Any person who was in your house could have potentially disabled part of your security alarm so that they can come back later and break in, undetected. Even a well designed security alarm is only

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secure when it's armed, and even then it's only secure from the outside – it is vulnerable to anyone who is already on the inside.

- Test your security alarm immediately after you make any modifications to or do any physical work on your house. Whether you're replacing a door or window, screwing or cutting into drywall, rewiring or changing Internet service providers. When you make changes to your house, that's when you are most likely to accidentally break something on the alarm system. Some accidents will automatically be detected by your alarm system but not all of them. For example, if you put a screw in a wall that cuts through and "shorts" the wires that go to a normally-closed security sensor, that will prevent the sensor from working but it will not be automatically detected by your alarm system.

- Test your security alarm after a lightning storm, power outage or even a power fluctuation. The system can be damaged by electrical problems just as easily as it can be damaged by physical modifications. It's a common occurrence during late summer and early fall in Columbus Ohio that we get called to repair a security alarm after a lightning storm.

- Test your security alarm at least once a month, in addition to the specific reasons we've already covered. Why? That helps cover you just in case you don't notice the particular event that caused your system to stop working correctly.

How do I test my security alarm system?
As described above, you need to perform the following steps:

1. Test all of your sensors
2. Test that your system is communicating with the central monitoring station.

To test the sensors, you must activate each sensor individually and verify that the security alarm is "aware" that it was activated. The easiest way to do this is for someone to help you test the sensors. Most alarm panels show on the keypad when a sensor is activated (e.g., door opened). Have your helper stand by the keypad and watch. Go around and activate each sensor and have your helper yell at you when they see it displayed on the keypad. If any sensor doesn't register on the keypad then there is a problem with that sensor that needs to be fixed.

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- To activate a <u>DSC door or window</u> open/close contact, first make sure all your doors and windows are closed. Then simply open and close the door or window you are testing.
- To activate a <u>DSC motion detector</u>, wait until the sensor has had time to settle and then walk in front of it. PIR or passive infrared motion detectors will take a little bit of time after they have last detected motion to settle or reset before they will be ready to detect motion again. This takes up to 2 minutes on some PIR motion detectors, so make sure no one walks in front of them for a full 2 minutes before you run the test.
- To activate a <u>DSC glass break detector</u>, thump the glass with a cushioned object like a pillow and immediately clap your hands together firmly three times in front of the glass break detector. The detector will alarm the red lights for 2 seconds. Repeat this test if necessary. If you still can't get it to do anything, try taking the outside cover off and see if the alarm complains that someone is tampering with it. If you get a tamper alert then at least you know it's communicating, but you need to get it to trigger from noise to know that it's working.
- To activate a <u>DSC flood sensor</u>, place some water on the metal probes on the floor.
- To test a <u>DSC smoke detector</u>, press the TEST button on the right side of the detector for a few seconds.
- To test a <u>DSC carbon monoxide detector</u>, press the round TEST button in the center of the detector for a few seconds. NOTE: The test button is the only proper way to test this device. Other methods may damage the detector.

To test that your system is communicating correctly with the central monitoring station, call our central station at <u>1-800-631-2299</u> and ask them to put your account in test mode. Next, trigger a real alarm by arming your system and activating one of your security sensors (e.g. open a door). Let the siren run for at least 60 seconds prior to disarming the alarm system.

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After doing the above, call back into the central station and verify that they received the alarm signal. Ask them to take your account off test mode. <u>If they didn't receive the signal, then you have a communication problem and need to contact SimpTech Solutions.</u>

In Summary

Think of testing your security alarm like changing the oil in your car. You might be tempted to not do it but you'll eventually be sorry if you don't.

If you ever have questions about your security alarm system or need a repair service call, please reach out to SimpTech Solutions at 859-757-1146 or support@simptechsolutions.com.