

Kiwis not alarmed by alarms, AA Insurance

Auckland, 19 October, 2015 – Only one in three Kiwis agree they would investigate a triggered burglar alarm, or call the police when they hear one, says a new AA Insurance survey.

“This kind of security apathy could be the reason behind fewer Kiwis activating their alarms when they leave their homes,” says Amelia Macandrew, Customer Relations Manager, AA Insurance. “They simply don’t believe that anyone will check on their property if their burglar alarm is set off, or are concerned it will annoy the neighbours if it’s triggered mistakenly.

“Yet alarms remain a great deterrent to thieves, who would sooner choose a property that won’t highlight their whereabouts.”

According to the 2015 AA Insurance Home Security Survey, 38 per cent of respondents had an alarm system, yet fewer than half of those (48 per cent) always turned it on when they went out, down from 56 per cent in 2014. A quarter of Kiwis reported they’d had their house broken into, with break-ins increasingly taking place while they were away for 24 hours or more, including when on holiday.

“If you’re concerned about your alarm sounding mistakenly, talk to your neighbours to let them know what to do if you aren’t around,” says Amelia. “If they know about your schedule, then they’ll be on the look out for anything out of the ordinary. And you can do the same for them.”

One AAI customer was notified of a break-in after a neighbour heard his alarm activate and decided to check his house. The culprit had broken through a side door while the customer was away for the weekend. Thanks to the alarm however, the burglar fled empty-handed. Insurance covered the only cost, which was \$2,370 for the damaged door.

Another customer was called by his alarm company while away from home. His neighbour saw a car fleeing the property and was able to catch the burglars on camera before informing police. The burglars made off with only a small television, laptop and some jewellery before the alarm activated and foiled their plans. The customer’s home and contents insurance covered \$5,100 for home repairs and several thousand dollars for the stolen items.

“As experts in home and contents insurance, we know the most common way burglars access homes is through a door or window that doesn’t have a lot of additional security, or are in average or below average condition,” says Amelia.

“Thieves are generally opportunistic and will choose the easiest target,” she says. “So an alarm that draws attention to the property may be just the deterrent to make them think twice before breaking into your home. It can’t always keep the burglar out, but it can detect a burglar in action and ensure they only take what they can grab quickly.”

Tips to reduce your burglary risk:

1. There are a wide range of security options to help protect your home that often complement each other, such as alarms, security lights, and deadlocks on doors and windows. But they’ll only work if you use them – even if you aren’t out for long.
2. Let your neighbours know what to do if your alarm is triggered, even by accident, and be sure you know what to do if theirs activates. Rather than approaching a thief, call the police or, if it’s safe to do so, gather information like a description of the culprit and a licence plate number to help them track the offender.
3. Make sure your valuables, including TVs and stereos, cannot be seen from the outside of your home.
4. Don’t advertise the fact your home is unattended, including messages on your answering machine and on social networking sites.
5. Make it difficult for someone to break into your home – lock your shed, put away your tools and wheelie bins, and trim trees and shrubs so there are no places for burglars to hide.
6. Lock up your lawn mower and garden tools when not in use, as they may end up working in someone else’s garden this summer.
7. If you’re out the back of your house don’t leave windows or doors open at the front.
8. Let your neighbours know if you’re going to be away, give them your contact phone number, and ask them to clear your mail, put washing on the line, or park in your driveway.
9. Be careful when disposing of any tell-tale packaging for TVs, gaming consoles and any new purchases.
10. Look after your house and car keys, by keeping them away from your front door, and not putting personal details on them like your name, number or address.



* In 2015, AA Insurance surveyed 1,100 regular Kiwis aged 18 years or over about their home security. The maximum margin of error on the total sample of n=1,100 is plus or minus 3.0 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

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About AA Insurance

AA Insurance Limited is an expert in New Zealand home, contents, and car insurance. Launched in 1994, we're a joint venture between New Zealand Automobile Association and Vero New Zealand, which is part of the Suncorp Group. We employ over 600 staff to look after more than 340,000 customers and 635,000 policies.

We proudly support youth charity Blue Light, and the NRL Telstra Premiership and Holden Cup referees in New Zealand, and have been consistently recognised by: Reader's Digest Most Trusted Brands (since 2011), NZ Direct Insurer Award (since 2012), Kenexa Best Workplaces Survey (since 2008), and Canstar Blue Most Satisfied Customers (since 2011). We've also been recognised among New Zealand's 50 most successful companies in the Rep Z: Corporate Reputation Survey.

AA Insurance has an A+ (Strong) Insurer Financial Strength Rating given by Standard and Poor's (Australia) Pty Ltd. For further information visit www.aainsurance.co.nz.

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