

DON'T LOSE YOUR SECURITY WITH VOIP

Check with Your Security Professional before Signing up for VoIP Service.

Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) is a wonderful new technology that can save consumers money by sending phone calls over the same broadband DSL or cable modem lines they use for their Internet connection. This means potential savings in long-distance rates over standard telephone lines because Internet connections have no additional charges for long distance.

Consumers who have monitored alarm systems must check with their professional security dealers before installing VoIP telephone service.

But consumers who have monitored alarm systems must be sure to check with their professional security dealers before installing VoIP. Because most alarm systems communicate over standard telephone lines, new VoIP service must be compatible with the system used by the company that monitors a home's burglar and fire alarms.

If it is incompatible, a fire or burglar alarm signal may not be received by the central station monitoring a home, or the signal may be received in a confused or incompatible fashion.

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Check with your professional security dealer or systems integrator for information about the most reliable way to convert your fire and/or burglar alarm system to VoIP.

have limited backup battery capacity, which is when a burglar or fire alarm may be needed most. This does not happen with standard telephone lines because they carry their own electric power.

Internet lines sometimes are shut down for maintenance. For surfing the Web, or even telephone calls, this may be a temporary inconvenience. But for an alarm system that must be connected 24/7, it can literally mean the difference between life and death. Sometimes just the act of disconnecting an alarm itself sets off an alarm, and if your municipality fines you for false alarms, this can be an expensive event.

No standard currently exists in equipment used for VoIP systems, so your professional security dealer or security systems integrator should be contacted for advice about which VoIP systems in your area work best with his or her company's monitoring services.

Another advantage of VoIP for commercial telephone customers is its ability to provide phone numbers located outside a customer's area code. This can allow a business to have local phone numbers in other states for their customers to call that are answered long-distance at the business' home office.

WHAT'S IN A TOUCH-TONE?

Each tone is two musical notes. The amount of time elapsing between each tone can be crucial for an automatic monitoring system to successfully interpret a signal.

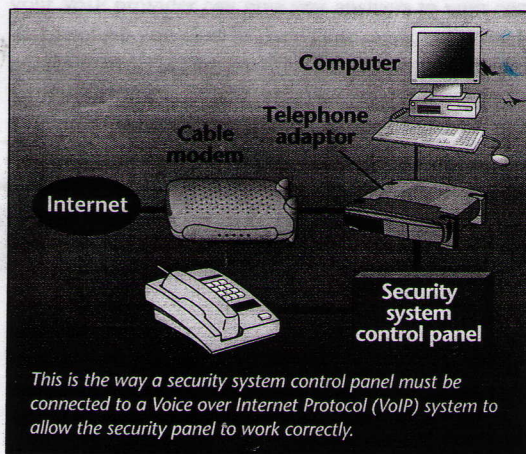
When a fire or burglar alarm is received from a home or business, the alarm panel sends a complex touch-tone signal to the central station. That automatically notifies the central station that an alarm has been received and tells it what kind of alarm it is.

This enables an operator at the central station to be notified of the alarm within seconds and automatically be given a list of options by the computer, such as contacting the police, fire department or the homeowner or business owner at one of several potential phone numbers.

If any step of this process is impeded by poor reception of the automatic system's touch-tone signal, the alarm may not be handled properly.

Because VoIP is a digital process, it breaks sounds into digital packets like the ones that contain information sent over the Internet. If those packets are not reassembled exactly the way they were received, the automated equipment receiving the signal may miss it. Some digital compression formats used by VoIP providers do not reproduce the signals accurately.

If the touch-tones are run too close together or too far apart, or if their pitch is not reproduced accurately, the signal may not be received. Even if signals are received in tests, they may not be received all the time. But for true security, fire and alarm signals must be received perfectly every time.

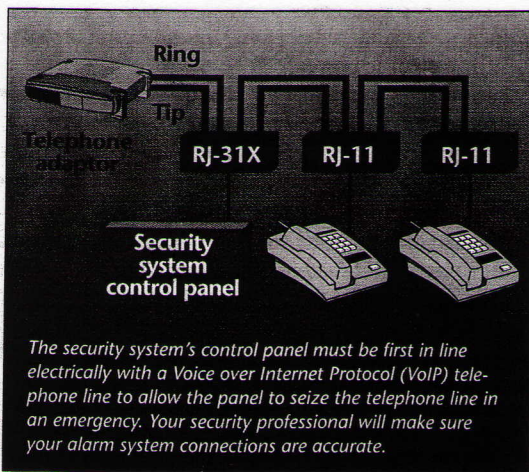


This is the way a security system control panel must be connected to a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) system to allow the security panel to work correctly.

WHAT CAN GO WRONG?

A lot happens when an alarm system goes off of which consumers may be unaware.

For example, when an alarm is received, the alarm system takes command of the telephone line and temporarily disconnects all other devices on the line to keep it open only for transmitting its alarm signal. This is called "line seizure," and for it to work the alarm system must be electrically connected to the telephone line first before any other devices.



When a VoIP system is installed, the alarm system must be connected first or this function cannot work. If any other devices are still connected to a phone line during an alarm, they may receive a call and tie up the phone line so the alarm system just receives a busy signal. When the phone line clears up, it may be too late.

If you connect a VoIP system, you must remember to contact your security company if your phone number changes, which it may. The security company will have to reprogram its equipment with your new telephone number, or the response to your alarm will not be sent to the correct phone number.

You also have to make sure you can both call your local 911 center with your new VoIP phone system, and that your 911 center can tell where you are located. Many 911 centers can determine from the telephone line where a call originates. That feature must be included with your VoIP system, or the VoIP company must have your updated address. If this is not done, your 911

center may not know where to dispatch police or fire if you are too incapacitated to give them your address.

It also is important that your security dealer send periodic test messages, called "polling," to your alarm panel to ensure that it is connected properly. VoIP may be introduced by phone companies on their lines among states even if you are using standard telephone lines, so that test message is crucial to discovering this, especially if your monitoring service is located in another state, which many are. VoIP also may be used without your knowledge over fiber-optic cable you may have running to or inside your home or business.

For all of these reasons, some security dealers and systems integrators recommend that customers retain a basic telephone line connection for the best service with their fire and/or burglar alarm system. Many VoIP providers themselves do not recommend connection of a security system to their equipment.

Telephone call savings still can be realized through the VoIP system, but having a standard telephone line can provide peace of mind for the security-conscious customer.

One method of alarm monitoring for commercial customers uses the Internet as the primary path for alarm signaling. Another type uses a long-range radio to transmit messages. These can use the Internet instead of regular telephone lines for message transmission and work with VoIP. Ask your security professional whether this service is available in your area.

A long-range radio or Internet backup system also is recommended for additional security when an alarm system is sent over VoIP.

If you have VoIP telephone service installed in your home or business, check with 911 or your local PSAP (Public Safety Answering Point) to ensure they still can receive your calls and know where you are located.

Remember, new technologies have to be incorporated into existing ones successfully over time. Make sure your VoIP provider can give you answers to your concerns before you change over your service. The technology is evolving constantly. Check with your professional security dealer or systems integrator for information about the most reliable way to convert your fire and/or burglar alarm system to VoIP.

CONTACT YOUR SECURITY PROFESSIONAL:

