

Electronic detection devices to keep your home safe

Last Updated: Wednesday, June 26th, 2013, Created: Wednesday, February 18th, 2004

In this episode we collected a whole bunch of interesting electronic devices that will help you with safety and security around your home. Many people worry about the health effects of electromagnetic fields caused by wiring and appliances. A gauss meter is what scientists use to measure the strength of those fields, and the Field Finder is a simplified homeowners version that can teach you a lot about what you cannot see in your house. Speaking of radiation, remember when microwave ovens first came out they came with little radiation detectors? That was when we didn't trust the technology and today we take it for granted. But the microwave detection cards still exist and it is a good idea to test your microwave regularly to verify that the door seals are not leaking dangerous radiation right in the area where you are working on dinner. (You will also be surprised at the amount of electromagnetic radiation that comes out of a microwave transformer, even when it is off! That is why I only plug mine in when I am using it.) Any alarm company can provide you with thermometers to measure pipe temperatures for freezing. You can even add in a telephone dialling capacity so your home or cottage calls you when there is a frozen pipe. You can also get water flood detectors either free standing or tied into your alarm system. There is one that I really like because it is both a flood alarm and a fill sensor. It has a bendable wire arm that you can use to hang off a bathtub or into a swimming pool and the signal sounds when the water reaches the height you want. My wife uses it every night to allow her to fill the bathtub and talk on the phone at the same time without the danger of that forgotten faucet. Household alarm systems no longer use that ugly tape around the windows to detect someone coming through the window itself -- now they either use a vibrator sensor on the glass or a sound detector hidden someplace in the room that will only react to breaking glass. Of course we all have smoke detectors and CO detectors but are you aware that they have a lifespan of no more than 5 to 10 years maximum. We tend to test the battery operated ones more frequently because we have to change the batteries, but do you know when your hardwired detectors were installed? They may have passed their lifespan and need to be replaced. I recommend that whenever you purchase a smoke or CO detector, check the manufacturers information as to its lifespan and put a sticker on it right away saying "replace me in June of 2009" -- just like the best before dates on yogurt. I do have to tell you of one new smoke detector made by First Alert. It has a remote control test and turn off that works from your regular TV zapper. You don't have to climb up on a chair, nor try to find some special gadget -- just point your TV zapper and it will shut-up if it is a toast problem, and you can test it easily and regularly without moving from your sofa. For hard of hearing, deep sleepers or deaf people, strobe lights are available that will work parallel to any kind of audio alarms. Now for the Dick Tracy come to life -- the Timex watch company has come out with a wrist watch that works like a zapper to turn on and off your home's alarm system rather than running to the code button panel. While we're talking about the front door -- intercoms now can have cameras attached to them so you not only talk to, but can see who is there, before opening the door or pushing that button to unlock an apartment door. Here is another one that has become a household essential; lit-up house numbers: PermaGlo.com. Having the numbers themselves light up means that you can find this house even if the porch light is in the wrong place, as most of them are. Cities like Seattle tell their emergency vehicles to give up if they can't find the number the first time down the street!

Keywords:

Gadgets, Emergency, Radiation, Electromagnetic Fields, Health, Environmental, Security, Safety, Electrical

