



Perimeter security – stopping criminals in their tracks

Ask any homeowner or business owner and most would certainly agree that if there were an intruder attempting to enter their property, they would prefer the intrusion to be detected long before the alarm signal inside the actual property has even had the opportunity to be tested. This makes a strong case for effective perimeter protection possibly being one of the most important aspects of a comprehensive security plan – but it shouldn't stop there.

Security experts and consultants have argued the case many times that the most effective security system encompasses layering, meaning there are as many deterrents between the intruder and the goods inside the property as possible.

The *Perimeter Security Sensor Technologies Handbook* which is published by the virtual Lockpick Library, and intended to be used as a sensor selection reference during the design and planning of perimeter security systems, states that the role of a perimeter security system is fourfold: deter, detect, document and deny/delay any intrusion of the protected area or facility.

It goes on to say that the integration of sensors and systems is a major design consideration and is best accomplished as part of an overall security system. "Interior detection sensors are used to detect penetration into a structure, movement within a structure or to provide knowledge of intruder contact with a critical or sensitive item. Exterior detection sensors are used to detect unauthorised entry into clear areas or isolation zones that constitute the perimeter of a protected area, a building or a fixed site facility."

THE CASE FOR LAYERING

At a breakfast meeting hosted by ADT South Africa last year, Dr **Rudolph Zinn**, from the Department of Forensic Investigation at the University of South Africa (UNISA), presented the findings of an investigation on house robbery trends. The study included the responses of 60 convicted criminals, 30 of which were convicted for house robberies and 30 for motor vehicle

hijackings – all incarcerated in the six largest correctional facilities in Gauteng. Dr Zinn focused on crime statistics relating to secure complexes and reported that although secure complexes have traditionally been perceived as more difficult targets, this perception is changing and that there has been a gradual increase in crime at complexes over the past couple of years.

"Often in the case with complexes, the homeowners rely too much on perimeter security and don't invest in security systems around their individual homes, making these units an easy target," he said.

He added that the respondents stated that various "layers," or combinations of security measures, such as electric fencing and burglar bars are more of a deterrent, as these homes take much longer to break into, than those that are less well protected.

Earlier this year, *Security Focus* also spoke to then acting head of NSA Risk Management, **Martyn Kerr**, of Nicholls Steyn and Associates, who explained the process of a security risk assessment. "In a gated community, we look at aspects such as access control, perimeter security, guarding and the physical security around the house itself, located within the gated community or complex. This in itself can be problematic, as many complexes, for aesthetic reasons, don't allow for individual residents to have 'unsightly' security measures such as burglar bars or security gates fitted," he says.

"In suburban areas, where stand-alone homes are concerned, the level of vulnerability certainly increases and the focus of our

assessment extends beyond the home itself right through to an assessment of the location, the proximity of the property to underdeveloped areas and so forth. Research has shown that in many incidents of house robbery and hijacking, the perpetrators are actually located a mere five to 10 minutes away from the victims whom they have targeted," added Mr Kerr.

He confirmed that when looking at security measures, the most effective for both gated communities and suburban areas, is what is known as the layered approach, where a combination of various measures are put in place to avoid criminals gaining access to the inside of the property. "The first area of focus is the perimeter of the complex and the house itself, which should ideally be surrounded by a wall or fence and electric fencing, which is remotely monitored by an armed response company," said Mr Kerr.

PREVENTION IS BETTER

When looking at the range of security or residential or business perimeter protection products, the list is endless. From basic electronic fencing, to alarms, detectors and CCTV to monitor the situation. The question seems to be selecting the ideal solution based on the individual property. Although the experts also agree that, depending on the client's budget, a combination of the various solutions would more than likely be the best approach.

However for high-risk sites like prisons and border control points, perimeter security has undergone significant technological changes and now also consists of elements such as fibre optics, buried detection systems, microwave