

Alarms & Digital Phone

THE 60-SECOND VERSION

- 1 Older alarm panels dial over a copper landline and may fail or garble on an internet phone.
- 2 A keypad beep does not prove the signal reached the monitoring center.
- 3 The usual fix is a cellular or internet (IP) communicator added to the panel.
- 4 Call the alarm / monitoring company BEFORE you switch your home phone.
- 5 TEST the system after any change — most companies have a test mode.

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Will My Security & Fire Alarm Work on a Digital Phone Line?

Will your security and fire alarm still reach the monitoring center?

————— **An Extended Guide · No. 1724** —————

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SUMMARY

The 60-Second Version

In a hurry? Here's the whole thing on one page. A lot of older security and fire alarm panels were built to signal the monitoring center by dialing out over a copper landline. When you switch your home phone to the internet — cable phone or VoIP — that older panel can fail or send a garbled signal the center can't read. The usual fix is a cellular or internet (IP) communicator added to the panel, so it stops relying on the phone line. Before you change your phone, call your alarm or monitoring company. And after any change, test the system — the companies have a test mode for exactly this.

- Older alarm panels dial over a copper landline and may fail or garble on an internet phone.
- A keypad beep does not prove the signal reached the monitoring center.
- The usual fix is a cellular or internet (IP) communicator added to the panel.
- Call the alarm / monitoring company BEFORE you switch your home phone.
- TEST the system after any change — most companies have a test mode.

WATCH OUT

Fire and carbon-monoxide monitoring is life-safety — don't guess with it. If your alarm might be dialing over a phone line you're about to change, call the alarm company and confirm before you touch anything.

1. Why This Guide Matters

An alarm that can't signal out is just a loud noise.

Let me be straight with you about why I take this one seriously. A monitored security or fire alarm has one job above all: when something goes wrong, it sends a signal to a monitoring center, and people there summon help. If that signal can't get out — or gets out garbled — then all you really have is a loud noise in the house and a false sense of safety. With fire and carbon monoxide, that gap can be life-threatening.

Here's the trouble. Many older alarm panels were built to send their signal by dialing out over a copper landline. As the old copper is retired and people move to internet-based phone, those older panels can stop reaching the monitoring center — sometimes failing outright, sometimes sending a signal so garbled the center can't make sense of it. And it often happens quietly.

So this guide is about one thing: making sure your alarm still reaches the monitoring center after any change to your phone. It's factual and practical. For anything about your specific panel's programming or your fire code requirements, the alarm company and your local authorities are the experts — my job is to help you understand the risk and ask the right questions.

TIP

If you only do one thing from this guide, call your alarm or monitoring company and ask: "If I change my home phone, will my alarm still reach you?" Their answer tells you what you need to know.

2. How a Monitored Alarm Works

The panel, the dialer, and the monitoring center.

Understanding the pieces makes the risk obvious. A monitored alarm system has a main panel — the brain, usually tucked in a closet or the basement — connected to your sensors, keypads, and sirens. When a sensor trips, the panel sends a signal to a monitoring center, where staff see the alert and respond: calling you, calling a keyholder, or dispatching police or the fire department.

The crucial link is how the panel reaches that center. For decades, the panel did it through a part called a dialer — it quite literally dialed out over your phone line and sent its alert as a burst of tones. That worked cleanly over copper. The whole system hinges on that link getting through. Break it, and the sensors can trip all they like, but no one is told.

GOOD TO KNOW

The weak point is always the link between the panel and the monitoring center. How the panel reaches the center — over your phone line, a cell signal, or the internet — is the entire safety question in this guide.

3. Why the Phone-Line Dialer Can Fail

What happens when copper becomes internet.

The older style of alarm panel reaches the monitoring center through a dialer that calls out over your phone line and sends its alert as special tones. Over the old copper, those tones traveled cleanly and the center received them perfectly. It worked, reliably, for a very long time.

The problem comes when the home phone moves to the internet. An internet or cable phone carries calls as data, and in the process it compresses and reshapes sound. The special tones an alarm dialer uses are fragile — that squeezing can corrupt them, so they arrive at the monitoring center scrambled or incomplete, or don't arrive at all. In the alarm industry, internet phone is widely considered unreliable for this exact reason, and for commercial fire alarms it's generally not permitted at all.

WATCH OUT

A panel may seem to “call out” as always — you might hear it seize the line — but the signal reaching the center can be garbled or missing. You cannot tell by watching the keypad. The only way to know is to test with the monitoring company.

4. The Keypad Beep Means Nothing

A dangerous assumption to clear up.

Here's a mistaken belief that puts people at risk, so let me put it plainly. When your alarm arms, disarms, or trips, the keypad beeps and lights up. That tells you the panel and keypad are talking to each other inside your house. It tells you nothing — nothing at all — about whether the signal successfully reached the monitoring center miles away.

Those are two completely separate things. The panel can beep cheerfully at you while its attempt to reach the center fails silently over a garbled internet line. So please don't take the familiar beep as proof that your alarm is doing its real job. The only proof is a test confirmed by the monitoring company.

WATCH OUT

Never assume your alarm reached the monitoring center just because the keypad beeped and the lights looked normal. The beep is the panel talking to itself. Confirming the signal got out takes a test with the company.

5. What a Communicator Upgrade Is

The usual fix, in plain English.

The good news is that there's a well-established fix, and it doesn't usually mean ripping out your whole alarm. It's called a communicator upgrade. A communicator is a small module added to your existing panel that gives it a new, reliable way to reach the monitoring center — one that doesn't depend on the phone line at all.

There are two common kinds. A cellular communicator sends the panel's signals over a cell network, the same kind a cell phone uses. An internet (IP) communicator sends them over your home internet connection. Both skip the fragile phone-line path. Many installers prefer cellular because it keeps working even if your internet is down, and it doesn't lean on your home's wiring — but the right choice depends on your home and your alarm company's offerings.

GOOD TO KNOW

A communicator upgrade usually adds a module to the alarm panel you already have — you often don't need a whole new system. Ask your alarm company what upgrade fits your panel and what it involves.

6. Dialer Capture — Another Route

A bridge for older panels.

There's a second approach worth knowing about, sometimes called a dialer capture device. Instead of replacing how the panel communicates, this little device sits between your old panel's dialer and a cellular or internet link. It fools the old panel into thinking it still has a normal phone line, catches the signals the panel tries to dial out, and carries them reliably over the cell network or internet instead.

This can be a tidy way to modernize an older panel without reprogramming it. Whether a communicator module or a dialer capture device is better for you depends on your

particular panel and what your alarm company supports. The point is simply that good options exist to get an older system off the fragile phone line — you're not stuck choosing between an unreliable alarm and a whole new system.

GOOD TO KNOW

If your alarm company mentions a “dialer capture” or a “cellular communicator,” both are ways to get your old panel off the phone line. Ask which one fits your panel and why they recommend it.

7. Call the Alarm Company First

Before you change a thing about your phone.

If you take nothing else from this guide, take this: before you switch your home phone to anything new, call the company that monitors your alarm. Tell them exactly what you're planning — “I'm moving my home phone to cable” or “I'm getting an internet phone.” They handle this constantly and can tell you precisely what it means for your system.

- 1 Find the monitoring company's number — on the panel, a keypad sticker, or your paperwork.
- 2 Call and tell them you're changing your home phone service.
- 3 Ask: “Will my alarm still reach you? Do I need a communicator upgrade?”
- 4 If they recommend an upgrade, ask what it involves and what it costs.
- 5 Schedule a test for after your phone change is complete.

This one call prevents the worst kind of surprise. The monitoring companies would far rather hear from you ahead of time than have an alarm fail to signal in a real emergency. And if you can't reach them or don't know who they are, that itself is worth sorting out — an unmonitored alarm is a different thing entirely.

TIP

Make this call before you schedule the phone switch, not after. If you need a communicator upgrade, you'll want it installed and tested before your old phone line goes away — not scrambling in the gap.

8. Always Test After a Change

The step that proves the signal gets out.

Asking the alarm company is step one. Testing is step two, and it's just as important, because the only way to truly know your alarm reaches the center is to send a test signal and have them confirm they received it clean. Every reputable alarm company has a test mode exactly for this, so you can trip the system without triggering a real police or fire response.

The usual way is to call the monitoring center, tell them you'd like to put the system in test mode, and then arm and trip it as they direct. They'll confirm they received each signal correctly — the burglary zones, and crucially the fire and carbon-monoxide signals. Do this right after any change to your phone, and on a regular schedule after that.

WATCH OUT

Never test by setting off the alarm without telling the monitoring company first — that triggers a real dispatch and can bring the police or fire department to your door. Always call and ask them to put the system in test mode.

9. Fire and Carbon Monoxide Are Different

Life-safety signals you don't gamble with.

I want to single out the fire and carbon-monoxide side, because it carries the highest stakes and deserves the most care. A burglary alarm that fails to signal is a serious problem; a fire or CO alarm that fails to signal can cost lives. These are what the industry calls life-safety signals, and there's a reason internet phone is generally considered unacceptable for commercial fire alarm signaling.

For a home, the same caution applies in spirit: if your panel monitors smoke, heat, or carbon monoxide and it signals over a phone line you're about to change, do not guess. Confirm with the alarm company and your local fire authority if needed, get the right communicator in place, and test the fire and CO signals specifically. This is not a corner to cut to save a little time or money.

WATCH OUT

If your alarm monitors fire or carbon monoxide, treat its signaling as life-safety. Confirm it reaches the center, in writing if you can, before and after any phone change — and test those specific signals, not just the burglary zones.

10. How to Tell How Yours Connects

Phone-line, cellular, or internet — and how to check.

You may not know offhand how your alarm reaches the monitoring center. That's fine — it's rarely obvious from the keypad, and guessing is exactly what we want to avoid. There are a few ways to find out.

- Look at the panel: a phone-line type usually has a cord running to a telephone wall jack.
- A cellular or IP type may have an added module, an antenna, or a network cable, and often no phone cord.
- Check your monitoring paperwork or bill, which sometimes names the connection.
- Simplest of all: call the monitoring company and ask them directly.

When in doubt, the phone call settles it in a minute. The monitoring company can see exactly how your panel reaches them and whether it needs an upgrade. Don't rely on a guess for something this important — especially if a phone change is coming.

GOOD TO KNOW

If your alarm panel has a cord plugged into a telephone wall jack, treat it as a phone-line type until the company says otherwise — and that means it needs checking before you change your phone.

11. Monitored or Self-Monitored?

Two different setups, two different concerns.

It's worth knowing which kind of alarm you have, because it changes what matters. A professionally monitored system sends its signals to a staffed center that responds for you — that's the kind this guide mostly addresses, and the kind where the phone-line problem bites. A self-monitored system, common with newer do-it-yourself kits, sends alerts to your own phone as a text or app notification instead.

Self-monitored systems usually work over your internet or a cell connection rather than a phone-line dialer, so they're generally not tripped up by a phone change in the same way. But they put the responsibility on you to see the alert and act. Whichever you have, the core question stays: does the alert reliably reach whoever is supposed to respond — a center, or you — after your phone changes?

GOOD TO KNOW

If you're not sure whether your alarm is professionally monitored or self-monitored, find out — it determines who responds when the alarm trips, and whether anyone responds at all. The alarm company or your paperwork will tell you.

12. The Outage Question

Will the alarm signal when the power's out?

Think through the storm scenario. A phone-line alarm running on an internet phone goes dark the moment the power or internet does, because the phone it depends on goes dark. Most alarm panels have a backup battery that keeps the panel itself powered for a while, but that doesn't help if the path it uses to signal out — your internet phone — is dead.

A cellular communicator is sturdier here. It signals over the cell network, and paired with the panel's backup battery it can keep reaching the monitoring center through a power outage, when an internet path would be down. That resilience is one of the main reasons alarm companies favor cellular for the communicator upgrade — the alarm keeps its voice even when the lights go out.

TIP

Ask your alarm company how long the panel's backup battery lasts, and whether your signaling path survives a power outage. For a life-safety alarm, a cellular communicator with a good battery is the most dependable setup.

13. What to Ask for the Upgrade

The questions that cut to what matters.

If your alarm company recommends a communicator upgrade, here are the questions I'd want answered before agreeing. They separate a sensible, lasting fix from an upsell.

- Will this get my panel completely off the phone line?
- Is it cellular, internet, or both — and which do you recommend for my home?
- Does it keep signaling in a power outage, and for how long?
- Does it cover my fire and carbon-monoxide signals, not just burglary?
- Is there a new or changed monthly monitoring fee?
- Will you test every signal with me after it's installed?

Write the answers down. A good alarm company will walk you through all of this patiently, because they want your system working as much as you do. If anyone rushes you or won't explain, that's a reason to slow down and get a second opinion. This is safety equipment, not an impulse buy.

TIP

Ask specifically whether the upgrade covers your fire and CO signals. Some conversations focus on burglary and quietly leave the life-safety signals out. Make sure every zone is covered.

14. If You're Keeping a Phone-Line Alarm

What to do if you can't upgrade yet.

Maybe you have a phone-line alarm and aren't ready to upgrade right now. That can be alright for a burglary-only system — but only if you've confirmed it still reaches the center over your new phone, and you keep testing it. Some internet phone setups carry alarm signals well enough; many don't. The only way to know is to ask the company and test, not to hope.

Two cautions, though. First, for fire and carbon-monoxide monitoring, I wouldn't gamble — get the proper communicator rather than relying on a phone-line signal that might garble. Second, remember the outage weakness: a phone-line alarm on an internet phone can't signal out in a power or internet outage. Weigh that honestly against the cost of the upgrade.

WATCH OUT

A phone-line alarm kept on an internet phone must be tested after the switch and regularly after that. If the monitoring company can't confirm clean signals — especially fire and CO — don't rely on it. Get the communicator.

15. Helping a Parent From a Distance

What adult children should check.

Many of my calls about this come from adult children worried about a parent's home. If you're helping from out of town, the alarm deserves a spot on your checklist whenever the parent's phone changes — because they may not realize a phone switch could silence their alarm, and may not think to mention it.

- Confirm how the alarm connects — call the monitoring company and ask.
- If the home phone is changing, make sure the alarm is checked before, not after.
- Push for a cellular communicator if the current setup is a phone-line dialer.
- Make sure fire and CO signals are covered and tested, not just burglary.
- Confirm the monitoring company has a current contact and keyholder list.

It's a caring thing to raise, framed simply: "I want to be sure your alarm can still call for help." Most people would far rather know their alarm works than discover a gap the hard way.

16. Keep the Monitoring Company Current

Contacts and codes they need on file.

An alarm is only as good as the information the monitoring center has about you. When they get a signal, they follow a list: who to call, in what order, and what your passcode is so they can tell a real alarm from a false one. If that list is out of date — an old phone number, a neighbor who moved away — the response slows down or goes sideways.

So take a few minutes once a year, and whenever something changes, to confirm the monitoring company has your current address, your current contacts and their numbers, and your passcode. It's a small housekeeping task that makes a real difference in how fast and how smoothly help arrives when the alarm does signal.

GOOD TO KNOW

Review your contact and keyholder list with the monitoring company once a year. An alarm that signals perfectly still needs an up-to-date list so the right people are reached quickly.

17. False Alarms and Verification

Keeping the system trusted and useful.

A quick word on false alarms, because they matter to how your system serves you. When the monitoring center gets a signal, they usually try to verify it's real before sending police — often by calling you and asking for your passcode. Too many false alarms can lead to fines from the local authorities and slower response, so it's worth keeping them down.

The good news is that getting your signaling onto a reliable cellular or internet path actually helps here, because garbled signals from a struggling phone-line dialer can themselves cause confusion at the center. A clean, modern connection means the signals that arrive are the real ones. Know your passcode, keep it handy but private, and make sure everyone in the house knows how to cancel an accidental trip.

TIP

Make sure everyone in the home knows the alarm passcode and how to cancel a false trip quickly. It keeps the system trusted and avoids unnecessary dispatches and fines.

18. Common Mistakes I See

The slip-ups that leave a home exposed.

After helping a lot of folks with this, the same few mistakes come up again and again. None of them are anyone's fault — the risk is easy to miss — but knowing them ahead of time keeps a home protected.

- Assuming the alarm “just works” on a new phone — it may not.
- Trusting the keypad beep as proof the signal reached the center — it isn't.
- Changing the phone service without calling the alarm company first.
- Upgrading burglary signaling but forgetting the fire and CO signals.
- Never testing, so a silent failure goes unnoticed for months.

WATCH OUT

The most dangerous mistake is the quiet one: an alarm that looks armed but can't signal out. The only cure is to ask the alarm company and test — including the fire and CO signals. Please don't skip it.

19. A Few Plain Words to Know

The jargon, translated.

The alarm world has its own terms. Here's the short translation so nothing throws you.

- Panel — the brain of the alarm, wired to your sensors and keypads.
- Dialer — the old part that signals the center by calling out over a phone line.
- Communicator — a module that lets the panel signal over cell or internet instead.
- Cellular / IP — signaling over a cell network, or over your internet connection.
- Monitoring center — the staffed center that responds when the alarm signals.
- Test mode — a way to trip the alarm to confirm it works, without a real dispatch.

TIP

Keep this little list with your guide. When the alarm company uses one of these words, you'll know exactly what they mean.

20. Questions I Get All the Time

Quick, plain answers.

Will my alarm stop working when I switch phones? It might, if it uses a phone-line dialer. A cellular or internet communicator won't be affected. Call the alarm company to be sure.

What's a communicator upgrade? A small module added to your existing panel that lets it signal over cell or internet instead of the phone line. You often don't need a whole new system.

Does the keypad beep mean it reached the center? No — the beep is just the panel and keypad talking inside the house. Only a test confirms the signal got out.

How do I test it safely? Call the monitoring center, ask them to put the system in test mode, then trip it as they direct. Never test without telling them first.

GOOD TO KNOW

If your question isn't here, it's probably one I've answered before — just call and ask. For panel programming or fire-code questions, the alarm company and your local fire authority are the right people.

21. Monitored Fire vs. Plain Smoke Detectors

Two different things that are easy to confuse.

Let me clear up a confusion I run into often, because it affects how worried you need to be. The battery-powered smoke detectors on your ceilings — the ones that chirp when the battery's low — are not connected to a monitoring center. They make noise in the house to warn whoever's home, and that's their whole job. A phone change doesn't affect them at all; they'll beep in a fire regardless.

A monitored fire alarm is different. That's part of a security system that signals a monitoring center, so the fire department can be called even if no one is home to hear it. It's the monitored kind that depends on the signaling path and can be tripped up by a phone change. If you're not sure which you have, the test is simple: is it tied to your alarm panel and monitoring service, or is it a standalone detector you bought at the hardware store?

GOOD TO KNOW

Your standalone ceiling smoke detectors keep working through any phone change — they just make noise in the house. Keep their batteries fresh. It's the monitored fire alarm, tied to your security panel, that needs the signaling check.

22. Thinking About a Whole New System

Sometimes an upgrade is the simpler path.

If your alarm is quite old, the conversation about getting it off the phone line sometimes turns into a bigger question: is it worth modernizing the whole system? That's a fair thing to weigh. Newer systems are built from the ground up to signal over cellular and internet, with no phone line in the picture, and many add conveniences like a phone app, cameras, and sensors you can check from anywhere.

I won't push you toward a new system or away from one — that depends on your budget, how well your current panel works, and what you want from it. A communicator upgrade on

a good existing panel is often the cheaper, simpler fix. A whole new system makes more sense if yours is failing or badly outdated. The honest move is to get a clear answer on both paths and their costs before deciding.

TIP

Ask your alarm company to price both options plainly: a communicator added to your current panel, versus a new system. Then you can choose with eyes open instead of being steered.

23. A Word on DIY Alarm Kits

The do-it-yourself systems and how they signal.

The newer do-it-yourself alarm kits you see advertised are worth understanding, because they handle the phone question differently. These systems generally signal over your home internet or a built-in cell connection from the start — they don't use a phone-line dialer at all. So a change to your home phone usually won't affect them.

That's a genuine advantage, but it comes with its own things to check. Many of these kits rely on your home internet, so they share the internet's weaknesses in an outage unless they have a cellular backup. And some are self-monitored, meaning the alert comes to your phone rather than a staffed center. Know how yours signals, whether it has a cellular backup, and who responds when it trips — the same core questions as any alarm.

GOOD TO KNOW

A do-it-yourself alarm kit usually signals over internet or cell, not a phone line, so a phone change won't silence it. Just confirm whether it has cellular backup for outages and whether a staffed center or just you responds.

24. What an Alarm Install Day Looks Like

If a technician comes to add a communicator.

If you go ahead with a communicator upgrade or a new system, there's usually a technician visit, and knowing what happens takes the mystery out of it. The technician locates your panel, adds the communicator module or installs the new equipment, and gets it talking to the monitoring center. For a cellular communicator they'll check the signal strength where the panel lives, since the panel is often in a basement or closet where the signal can be weaker.

Before the technician leaves, the two of you should test every signal with the monitoring center on the line — not just that the system arms, but that each zone, including fire and carbon monoxide, reaches the center clean. Don't let them pack up until that's confirmed. A reputable installer expects this and will do it as a matter of course.

- Ask the technician to confirm signal strength at the panel's location.
- Have them test every zone with the monitoring center, fire and CO included.
- Ask how long the backup battery lasts and when it'll need replacing.
- Get it in writing that the system is off the phone line entirely.

TIP

If coordinating the alarm technician, your new phone, and the testing feels like a lot to juggle, that's exactly the sort of thing I'm glad to help line up so nothing gets missed.

25. Snowbirds and Empty Homes

An alarm matters most when no one's there.

If you spend part of the year away — down south for the winter, say — your alarm is doing its most important work precisely when the house is empty and no one's there to hear a siren. That makes the signaling path even more critical: a monitored alarm that can't reach the center while you're a thousand miles away is no protection at all.

So if you're a snowbird and you've changed your home phone, don't leave for the season without confirming the alarm still signals out — ideally with a cellular communicator that doesn't depend on a phone or internet line that might fail in your absence. Make sure the monitoring company has a local keyholder they can reach while you're gone, and test everything before you lock up and drive off.

WATCH OUT

Never leave for the season trusting an alarm you haven't confirmed can signal out. An empty house is exactly when you need it working. Test it and line up a local keyholder before you go.

26. A Yearly Alarm Check-Up

A simple habit that keeps you protected.

Your alarm setup can quietly drift out of date — a battery ages, a contact moves away, a phone or internet change happens that no one connected to the alarm. So I suggest a yearly alarm check-up, tied to a date you'll remember, perhaps alongside the twice-a-year smoke detector battery routine when you're already thinking about safety.

- 1 Call the monitoring center, ask for test mode, and test every zone including fire and CO.
- 2 Confirm the panel's backup battery still holds a charge; replace it if old.
- 3 Review your contact and keyholder list and update anything that changed.
- 4 Make sure your signaling is still off the phone line and on cell or internet.
- 5 Note the date so you know when you last checked.

TIP

Pair your alarm check-up with the twice-a-year smoke detector battery routine. A few minutes, once a year, keeps the whole safety net in good repair.

27. When to Just Call Me

The phone-side piece is exactly what I help with.

I wrote this guide so you'd understand the risk and know what to check. The phone side of it — figuring out whether your alarm dials over the line, coordinating with your alarm company before you switch, making sure your new phone won't silence the alarm, and confirming the testing gets done — is exactly the kind of thing I help with. The alarm panel's own programming and the communicator install are usually the alarm company's work, and I'll gladly coordinate with them so nothing falls through the cracks.

I come to you, here in Portage County and the nearby towns. The first in-home visit is a flat ninety-nine dollars, and if a problem can be handled without a trip, I offer remote help too. If you're not completely happy with a visit, I'll make it right or refund it. That's the whole deal — no fine print.

TIP

When you call, my assistant Sophie may answer and take down the details so I can call you back — she's there so you always reach a friendly voice, not a dead end.

28. What I'd Tell My Own Neighbor

The short, honest version.

After 30+ years of professional experience helping folks through exactly this kind of change, here's the plain advice I'd give over the fence. Before you touch your home phone, call the company that monitors your alarm and ask whether it'll still reach them. If it's an older phone-line dialer, get a cellular or internet communicator so it stops depending on the phone line. Don't trust the keypad beep. And test the whole system — fire and carbon monoxide included — after any change.

That's really the whole thing. A monitored alarm is meant to call for help the instant something goes wrong. A little checking now makes sure it keeps doing that, power outage or not. For the panel and the fire code, lean on your alarm company; for the phone side, lean on me — and together we'll make sure nothing slips through.

GOOD TO KNOW

If any of this feels like a lot, that's normal. You can hand the phone side to me — I'll coordinate with your alarm company, make sure your new phone won't silence the alarm, and see that it's all tested before the old line goes away.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

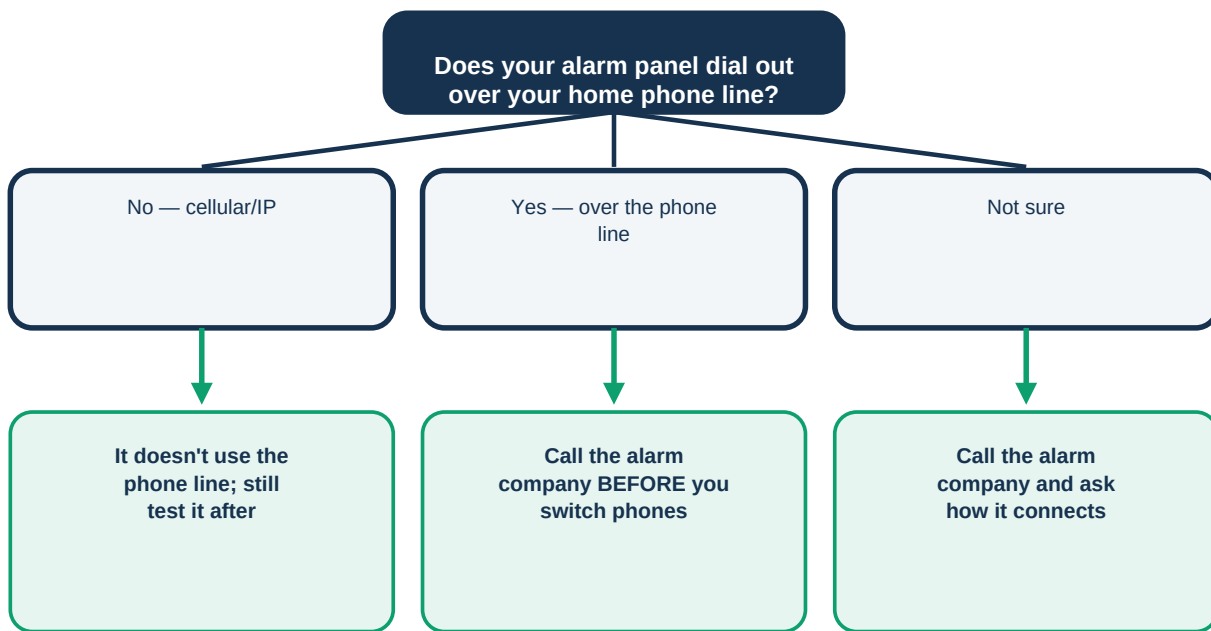
Keep this by the phone. I want to... Do this. Know if my alarm is at risk — call the alarm or monitoring company and ask whether it dials over the phone line or uses cell/internet. Protect it before switching phones — call the alarm company **BEFORE** you change your home phone; get a cellular or internet communicator if yours is a phone-line dialer. Protect fire and CO — treat those as life-safety; don't guess, confirm and test them specifically. Prove it works — after any change, call the center, ask for test mode, and trip the system as they direct; never test without telling them. Don't trust the beep — the keypad beep does not mean the signal reached the center. Get tech help — call Bill: (330) 200-8042.

AT A GLANCE

A Picture to Follow Along

Will My Alarm Still Reach the Center?

Follow the path for your system



A keypad beep does NOT prove the signal reached the monitoring center.

After any phone change, test the system — most companies have a test mode.

AT A GLANCE

A Second Look

Two Ways an Alarm Reaches Help

How it connects is the whole safety question

	Phone-line dialer	Cellular / IP
How it signals	Dials your home line	Cell signal or internet
Risk on an internet phone	May fail or garble	Not affected
Needs a home phone?	Yes	No
Works in a phone outage?	No	Cellular rides its battery

Confirm your panel's method with the alarm company; don't guess.

BEFORE YOU GO

A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill. I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results.



HOW I CAN HELP

Your Visit — and My Promise

In-home visit — \$99 flat for your first visit. No contracts and no surprise charges, and a 30-day follow-up is included.

Remote Support — \$49 for a screen-share session. I only connect with your permission, you watch the whole time, and you can end anytime. If I can't fix it over the screen-share, I refund the \$49 — and if it turns out you need me in person, that \$49 goes toward your visit. It's included free for Support Plan members (\$39/mo).

GOOD TO KNOW

My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full \$99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated.

Call or text **(330) 200-8042** · Book a visit: billshometech.com/book · bill@billshometech.com

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