

## Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP)

There is a new service being offered called "Voice Over Internet Protocol" (VoIP), or Internet telephone service. Since your alarm system communicates over telephone lines, you need to be aware of how VoIP may affect your alarm system.

Alarm systems are manufactured to transmit signals over what the phone company calls a "Plain Old Telephone Service" or "POTS" line. This is the industry standard.

Companies providing this new, *unregulated*, telephone service have not given proper considerations to you and the alarm industry itself when setting up their networks.

There are several things to consider prior to switching to VoIP. First, what happens if the electricity goes out? If there is no power to the Internet device (such as a cable box), an alarm signal cannot be transmitted. Secondly, the Internet can be down either due to hackers, a failure at your Internet provider or your provider taking the service down for upgrades to the system. Many providers service their systems in the middle of the night when you are relying on our services the most. *In short, if the Internet isn't working, your alarm's signals cannot be passed to our central station.*

Next, an alarm connected to a VoIP telephone system will not be able to seize the line when it needs to transmit a signal. This means that if someone is on the phone while your alarm tries to transmit to us, we will not get the signal.

Many VoIP service providers, including AT&T, are currently saying that their systems are "not compatible" and/or "will not support" alarm systems.

If you choose VoIP for your phone service, please notify the alarm company upon ordering the service. It is imperative that certain changes are made to the way your phone lines are connected to your alarm system. Also, testing will need to be done to ensure that your alarm system is compatible with VoIP and that signals can be transmitted to us.

Our suggestion to all of you that are considering VoIP is to add a cellular backup to your alarm system. Although there is an initial cost for the unit, the monthly charge is only \$8.99. This is, by far, the best solution to keep your alarm system operating as it should after a switch to VoIP and is less costly than keeping a POTS line active just for the alarm.