

# Who's protecting your pets when you're not?

(ARA) — Americans know the importance of installing smoke detectors to protect family members, loved ones and pets in the event of a fire. The batteries are replaced each year when the clocks spring forward and fall backward and there is peace of mind in the idea that they will provide due warning in the event of an actual fire in the home.

But what happens when you're not at home and your smoke detector goes off?

"Nothing," says Jamie Haenggi, chief marketing officer for Protection 1 Security Solutions. "If there is a fire in your home when you're not there, it will eventually reach a point where your neighbors may see or smell smoke and call the fire department, but it will likely be too late to save your property and, more importantly, your pets. This is where monitored alarm systems can save lives — even of the four-legged variety."

Each year, 40,000 pets are killed in house fires according to the Humane Society of the U.S. While some of these deaths occur when the homeowner is present, but unable to rescue their pets, most occur when no one is at home to call for help.

The following are a few simple pet safety tips and other steps you can take to protect your property in the event there is a fire in your home when no one is there:

1. Put pet decals prominently in your front windows to alert first responders to the fact that you have pets inside. You can get these magnetic cling stickers at your pet store, local fire department, from your alarm company or you can buy them online.

2. Keep your yard clean and hedges trimmed. This will allow greater visibility for your neighbors and will prevent the possibility of a brush fire near your home.

3. Have your heating system inspected every fall. Carbon monoxide poisoning is a silent killer responsible for more than 400 human deaths and 20,000 trips to the emergency room each year.

4. Make sure one of your trusted neighbors has a key to your home. In the event of an emergency, they may be able to open a door to let firemen in — or your pet out.

5. Investing in a monitored alarm system is one of the best ways you can protect your family — and your pets. For about a dollar a day, you can enjoy peace of mind that there is someone guarding your property at all times.

"Aside from the traditional alerts in the event of fire, break-in or carbon monoxide presence, today's alarm monitoring systems have expanded capabilities that just may surprise you," says Haenggi. For example, Protection 1's eSecure system gives you Web-based monitoring capabilities that will no doubt become as important to you as updating your Facebook wall posts.

With eSecure you can control your security system through any Internet connection using your computer or smartphone. Turn the system on or off via the app or by text message; receive notifications when your kids get home from school; and monitor the temperature of your home when you leave your cat alone for the weekend. You can even have your system set up to control just about any small appliance in your home — you'll never have to wonder if you turned off the coffee pot again.

On top off all of that, monitored security systems often include the installation of multiple interior and exterior cameras. Now, you can log in and finally see what your pets do all day when you're at work.

