

## Current Trends - Jim O'Donnell

I am constantly surprised that long term clients don't remember that we are general, high voltage electrical and limited energy contractors. We don't fix roofs, but we do many other services including gates and automation, video surveillance, card access systems, fire alarms and generator installations.

Hopefully the really heavy snows and bad weather are over and we can all look forward to spring and some decent weather. That means summer is around the corner and since most of our clients do not have air conditioning, they have to decide whether to leave windows open when they leave the house or go to bed.

An excellent solution to this problem is to remake the win-

dow screen into a security device that we call an **alarm screen**. We can alter your existing screen or make an entirely new one so it can tell the alarm system if it is being tampered with or if the screen fabric is being cut during an intrusion. This way you can have flow-through ventilation and superior home security while you are gone or at home, sleeping.

### Current Trends:

Part of what we do at Statewide Security is to provide our observations of trends that we're following and what we think you can do to remain protected.

- The meth epidemic shows no sign of abating. It has long legs and the people involved are getting recycled in and out of the Criminal Justice System or are being replaced by



new addicts. We know the recovery rate for these drug users is only around 4% so if they are not taken off the street for a long period of time, they are simply back out hunting for new victims to support their habit. I hear daily from someone in our area that their neighbor, co-worker or family member has been burglarized.

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## General Fuel Storage Guidelines

### Safe Fuel Handling

- Fill containers about 95% full.
- Cap containers tightly.
- Store containers out of direct sunlight in a location where the temperature stays below 80° F most of the time (a vehicle or piece of equipment with gasoline in the fuel tank may be stored in direct sunlight as long as the tank is shaded from the sun).

Gasoline has the advantage of being a liquid at room temperature. But it is probably the hardest fuel to store for any length of time. It has a high vapor pressure (which means it evaporates quickly) and will go stale in a few weeks if not chemically treated. It does have a fairly high ignition temperature (about 1100° F) even

though it does not need a large volume of heat to ignite. Gasoline must be treated with a BHT additive like Sta-Bil and protected from moisture if it is to be stored for any length of time.

Regardless of the tank location, a dry chemical or CO2 fire extinguisher should be hung on the outside of the building. Any electrical fixtures should be "explosion proof" (sealed) and wired in sealed conduit to prevent fuel vapors from coming into contact with electrical sparks. Prohibit smoking or carrying of smoking materials within 50 feet. Always shut down the engine of the machine being fueled. Promptly clean up any spills. Last of all, be certain to use only the equipment that is approved for the fuel in question. (Some auto and generator fuel pumps are

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## Current Trends Continued

- Personal confrontations are up significantly. Your chances of meeting someone committing a crime at your home or business have never been higher than they are today. This doesn't mean you need to buy new security equipment. Use what you have consistently and then come to our Pepper Spray class (no charge for product or training) and learn how to deal with tense situations where your personal safety may be at risk.
- Identity theft is on the upswing. Are you shredding your bank statements and other documents that have personal ID on them? I am hearing that only one client in four is presently doing this. Please get a shredder and grind it all up!
- There are more and more second story burglaries on the news. Chain up your ladder if it is outside so it doesn't make it easier to burglarize your building, and rethink how someone can climb to an upper story balcony or window. It might be easier than you think.
- **Lock popping** is a technique that allows a burglar to insert a key into your door lock and tap it with a small hammer while turning the key, opening the door even when the key is not cut for your door lock. We watched this demonstrated on TV last week and are now switching all our office and home locks to Medeco keyways as these locks are immune to lock popping. Call me for recommendations for a



locksmith in your area (Jim's cell- 206-510-9332).

- Consider adding a few low profile cameras to the outside of your home or business.
- New, inexpensive Digital Video Recorders are coming out from Mitsubishi that allow them to be integrated to your home Broadband (cable or DSL) network and do not require a fixed I/P address. In today's world, each computer or high speed modem has an address on the internet which changes regularly. Virtually all digital video recorders currently require a fixed I/P address so it can be reached from offsite as the address stays the same. Fixed I/P addresses typically require an additional charge since as the broadband provider normally switches I/P addresses. Imagine trying to call a friend on the phone if their phone number was constantly changing? With this new equipment you can use the equipment's domain name connecting ability to connect to or receive incoming connections over the Internet. There are many security barriers to protect your equipment and your privacy.
- Do you have teenagers or 20 something kids who still live at home? Would you like to know if they are having a party while you are away? If there was any criminal activity at your home, having a digital video recorder might be the only way to identify the criminals

and recover your property or arrest the bad guys.

- Most of our clients have recovered from the tree damage by now. We've repaired generators, installed Gentrans and power transfer switches, installed new generators and assisted clients in choosing new whole-house standby generators. Because the power outages were so wide spread and so persistent, we now have a much better idea of the problems that will occur during a massive earthquake. The Federal Government is asking all citizens to have three days of basic necessities on hand and we think that is a great start. We can now see that a really big earthquake will likely paralyze our infrastructure for 30 days or more. Once you're prepared for the 3 day emergency, talk to us about what you can do to extend that period. The intention is to operate without having to leave the area (assuming you could get out) and be self-sufficient.
- We are increasing the battery back up time for many of our clients so they can go for 24 to 48 hours during a prolonged power outage.
- I have received many calls from clients and friends asking for referrals to get construction repairs and other types of work done. We are assembling a list of contractors and service people who've shown good work quality and business ethics. Please call the office for information on contractors.

## General Fuel Storage Guidelines Continued

approved for diesel only, and are unsafe to use for gasoline.)

### How much fuel do you need?

Well, if "survival unassisted for 72 hours" is to be the yardstick, how many hours out of that 72 will you be actually running the generator? Remember that the fridge and freezer will STAY cold if you can run it a few times a day for an hour or so each time, and the furnace fan won't have to be on all the time either. During daylight hours, there is little need for lights, and you might want peace & quiet at night. Ideally a total of 5 - 6 hours per day should do it, but let's assume (for this example) a total of 8 hours per day. What is the real (actual) fuel consumption of your generator, (gallons per hour) times 8 hours per day, times 3 days. A "2 gallon per hour" machine will need to have  $8 \times 3 \times 2 = 48$  gallons on hand!

Don't keep the gas around forever, either. Just as with everything else, rotate your stock. If you keep several 5 gallon gas cans full, do not keep any one of them more than 6 months. Simply rotate the stock, by putting the oldest gas into the car, and refilling the gas can at the service station, adding fuel stabilizer each time. If you only need to have 12 gallons on hand, get three 5 gallon cans (15 gallons total), and once a month put one into your car, and then refill it, putting it at the back of the row. Next month, put the next one in, etc. If you "rob" your supply to fill the lawn mower, that's fine, too, just make sure you keep minimums on hand.

### Storage Containers

- Fuel should be stored in an isolated area, downhill from any other buildings; fuel vapors are heavier than air, and will flow downhill. If set below the frost line, temperatures are stable at 55° F or so, this will inhibit evaporation.
- Store gasoline only in a container clearly intended for the purpose. Use only approved containers; the standard color code for portable cans is blue for kerosene, red for gasoline, and yellow for diesel fuel.
- One, two and five gallon containers should carry a sticker indicating they are approved for gasoline storage by the Underwriters Laboratories (UL). A plastic container has the advantage that it will not rust if the gasoline is contaminated with water or if

the container is stored in a wet place.

- A 60-gallon metal drum is the only container approved by the Uniform Fire Code for the storage of more than five gallons of gasoline.
- Sta-Bil is a fuel stabilizer which prevents gas from breaking down. It is available at many hardware, "big box" home supply stores, automotive stores and places where mowers and chainsaws are sold. The stabilizer will work only if it is added to fresh gasoline; it can't fix gasoline that has started to deteriorate.
- Federal and California reformulated gasoline will survive storage as well or better than conventional gasoline.
- Adding oil to gasoline doesn't change its stability. Gasoline-oil mixtures for two-stroke-cycle engines will survive storage as well as gasoline itself.
- Do not store a container of gasoline near an ignition source such as an appliance pilot light.
- Local Fire Department regulations may supersede the Uniform Fire Code. When storing more than five gallons of gasoline it is best to check with your local Fire Department for local regulations.

The Uniform Fire Code limits the amount of gasoline in residential buildings to the amount "necessary for maintenance purposes and operation of equipment," not to exceed a maximum of 25 gallons.

Note: The volatility of gasoline is tailored for the range of temperatures expected in the locality where it is sold. Engines fueled with "summer gasoline" may be more difficult to start in cold weather.

So, determine your needs, get the gas in convenient, easy to move sizes, use a fuel stabilizer, rotate the stock, and store it securely away from the house. Be sure to occasionally test your generator and accomplish maintenance as per the manual. Now you're prepared for an unexpected power outage.

### Information Sources:

- [www.Chevron.com](http://www.Chevron.com)
- [www.backwoodshome.com](http://www.backwoodshome.com)
- [www.theepicenter.com](http://www.theepicenter.com)

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*We have changed our phone system. Please listen to the options carefully to aid in getting the service you need. If you are not sure which option to select during normal business hours please push 2 and it will connect you with the office. The system is designed to allow you to contact our various departments, sales, service, scheduling, accounting, or central dispatch directly.*

*The office hours are 8:00am to 5:00pm Pacific Time. When calling after-hours, press 5 to be auto-routed to the Central station who will have the on-call staff member return you call promptly.*

**Statewide Security maintains an "on call" staff of competent journey-men rated technicians, investigators and protective specialists, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.**

## *Spring 2007—Alarm System Maintenance Special*

When was the last time you had us out to look over your home or business? Have you made additions, do all of your sensors and smoke detectors work? How long ago was a system test conducted?

Take advantage of our alarm system maintenance special.

Did you know?

1. Your back up batteries are only good from 3-5 years and sometimes less if they have gone through any power outages of 5 hours or longer.
2. Your smoke detectors need to be cleaned and tested regularly.
3. The Code requires residential cleaning and in-

spection by a qualified technician every three years.

4. Commercial locations must have a fire system service annually.
5. No reason to doubt that everything is in working order if you keep it maintained.

### The Alarm System Maintenance Special includes:

1. Test all devices; door and window contacts, motion detectors, glass break detectors, etc.
2. Clean and test smoke detectors.
3. Your first alarm panel back up battery is FREE, included as part of our service.

4. We'll update your emergency call list, add and delete system codes and advise you of any correction that needs to be made to your system.

**Call the office to  
schedule your  
maintenance  
service.**

**(425) 558-4640**

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