ALARM INSTALLERS — GUIDE

How alarm monitoring works and what it costs

Understand signal handling, published plan examples and the full cost of a contract.

Updated November 10, 2026

An alarm panel sends an event to a monitoring service. The operator follows the response plan for that event. UL describes a monitoring station as a business that monitors fire, security or video signals. Ask who receives your signals and what happens after they arrive. An app notification and an operator response are different services.

Follow the signal

Ask the installer to show the route from a sensor to the panel, then to the monitoring station. Record the communication method. Ask what happens if the internet connection fails, power fails or a contact cannot answer. Request a supervised test with the monitoring station before handover. Arrange the test in advance so it does not cause an unwanted dispatch.

Published price examples

Alarm Grid's monitoring page, fetched 2026-11-10, lists central station plans at USD $15, $25, $35 and $45 per month. Its self-monitoring plans are listed separately. The USD $10 self-monitoring entry is not the same service as central station monitoring. These are examples from one provider, not a market average or a quote for your property.

SimpliSafe's monitoring page, fetched 2026-11-10, advertises Core at USD $1.10 per day, Pro at USD $1.66 per day and Pro Plus at USD $2.66 per day. Daily advertising units do not establish the exact monthly invoice. Confirm billing terms and equipment eligibility with the provider.

Build a comparable quote

Request separate amounts for equipment, installation, activation and recurring monitoring. Add taxes, permits, maintenance, camera storage, mobile access and cellular service if they apply. Ask which charges can change during the contract. Keep the currency beside each amount. Compare the same scope and term.

Read the exit terms

Ask who owns the panel and who controls the installer code. Request the cancellation method, renewal clause, notice period and transfer procedure in writing. Ask whether a replacement provider can reuse the equipment. Keep the response with the signed scope. A lower monthly price can be poor value if it excludes the service you need.

Sources

- UL Solutions, Central Station Service Certification. Public page fetched 2026-11-10: https://www.ul.com/services/central-station-service-certification.
- Alarm Grid, Alarm Monitoring. Public page fetched 2026-11-10: https://www.alarmgrid.com/monitoring.
- SimpliSafe, Professional Monitoring. Public page fetched 2026-11-10: https://simplisafe.com/features-alarm-monitoring.

Frequently asked questions

Can I use this guide instead of a site assessment?

No. Ask an alarm company for a written assessment. Confirm local requirements with the authority that applies to the property.