

Alexa Guard Home Monitor

Amazon just rolled out Alexa Guard to all Echo users. Your Echo can now listen for breaking glass, alert you to smoke alarms, and randomly turn your lights on and off. But it's not a full security system.

What Is Alexa Guard

[Alexa Guard](#) is a new free service from Amazon for Amazon Echo users. When you enable Guard, your [Echo devices](#) start listening for the sound of glass breaking or smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. If an Echo detects any of those noises, it will send you an alert.

Amazon accomplishes this feat by altering the wake word behavior for your Echo devices. Usually, your Echo listens for "Alexa" (or one of the optional wake words) to activate. But enabling and activating Guard mode adds additional "wake words" that match up to the sound of glass breaking and alarms. In other words, your Echo listens for these sounds just like it listens for "Alexa." When you deactivate guard mode, your Echo returns to its standard behavior.

Beyond listening for trouble, Guard can take some basic preventative actions. If you have smart lights tied to the Alexa platform, Guard can turn them on and off at random intervals to give the appearance that you're home. You choose which smart lights are automated, so your basement light isn't turning on and off pointlessly.

Once enabled, you arm Guard by telling Alexa "I'm leaving" and disarm by saying "I'm home." Your Echo will say it's starting or stopping guarding. You'll receive an Alexa notification on your phone, too.

Alexa Guard Isn't a Monitored Security System, But it's Helpful

The Simplisafe on the left offers a monitored security system; the Echo on the right does not.
Josh Hendrickson

Alexa Guard isn't a monitored security system. Amazon spells that out multiple times in its FAQ:

Alexa Guard is not a replacement for an alarm system or life safety device and cannot contact emergency services, such as the police or fire department, on your behalf. Smart Alerts are provided for informational purposes only.

This is something to keep in mind. Alexa Guard won't contact the police or fire department for you. For example, let's say you're at the theater and your phone is set to do not disturb. If your house catches fire or a burglar smashes all your windows, you won't receive the notifications. It may be too late to notify the police or fire department by the time you do see the notifications.

If you're looking for a security system with monitoring services, you may want to consider [SimpliSafe](#) or [Amazon's Ring Alarm System](#).

But, chances are, you don't usually keep your phone on do not disturb when you leave the house. If you don't have any security system at all right now and you have one or more Amazon Echo devices in your home, this could be a step up from your current situation.

Smoke alarms are an essential part of every home, but they do little good when you leave home—unless you spend over \$100 per unit replacing your existing alarms with a smart version like [Nest Protect](#). With Alexa Guard, you have a chance of being notified about a fire or a home intruder with just an Echo. Should your Echo have a camera (like the Echo Show), you can use the [Drop In feature](#) to see what's happening before calling emergency services.

Home security is just as much about prevention and reaction. Deterring a home invasion is better than interrupting one. That's why security systems encourage you to put out a "Protected by" sign: thieves prefer the lowest hanging fruit. Guard's smart light integration makes it look like you're home, and that's helpful.

Some Security Systems Work with Guard

While Alexa Guard isn't a security system itself, it can work together with some monitored security systems. Guard can forward your alarm notifications to your security service—along with recorded audio—if you choose to enable this option.

Your security service will take the information and then act on it as the company deems appropriate, whether that be contacting you, calling emergency services, or both. Amazon says Alexa Guard is compatible with Ring and ADT monitored services. Others may be compatible as well.

It's a good idea to get in contact with your security system to learn if it works with Alexa Guard and what steps are necessary on your part.

How to Use Alexa Guard

Before you can arm and disarm Alexa Guard, you have to enable it. Start by opening the Alexa app on your phone. Tap the hamburger menu in the upper left corner.

Tap "Settings" in the menu sidebar.

Scroll down the list of options until you see "Guard" and tap on it.

Next, tap "Set Up Guard," and you'll be prompted to enable glass detection, smoke detection, and smart light randomization. Tap "Add" for each thing you want to enable.

After you enable randomized smart lights, provide your ZIP code (to determine when sunset is) and choose which lights to randomize. You'll find some lights selected automatically. Check any you want to add and uncheck any you don't want in the rotation. Tap "Continue" once you've chosen your lights.

Finally, tap "Confirm" to finish the setup process.

When you're ready to leave the house, say "Alexa, I'm leaving," and Alexa Guard will arm. When you get home tell Alexa "I'm home" and Guard will disarm. You'll receive notifications on your phone when Guard turns on and off.

Once you understand what Alexa Guard does, it's quite powerful. Without having to buy glass breaking sensors or smart thermostats, you get on-the-go notifications from your home. It won't solve every worst-case scenario. But, whether or not you're using a monitored security system now, it can give you some extra peace of mind.