"VoIP" and home security systems

A new type of phone service continues to grow in popularity. Not dependent on traditional "landline" service, "VoIP" (Voice over Internet Protocol) technology allows people to place phone calls by broadband connection. This technology makes it possible to forego traditional residential phone service. Those who already have VoIP service or those who are considering its use should consider the following:

• Your home may lose connection to the phone service that links your alarm system to outside emergency assistance.

• If you chose VoIP service, your service provider or alarm security company may need to reconnect your phone service to the alarm control panel. Before the VoIP provider leaves the home, you should test the system with your security alarm company.

• In the event of a residential power outage, your alarm system may not be able to communicate with your alarm monitoring company. To address this concern either install a back-up wireless radio transmitter or use a "measured phone line."

Before changing to VoIP service, the University Park Police Department encourages you to discuss these concerns with your alarm system provider. If you already have VoIP service, to make sure that the reliability of the system hasn't been compromised, the Department recommends that you test your system monthly.

City's Direct Alarm program

The University Park Police Department's Direct Alarm program monitors security alarm systems directly from the City's police and fire dispatch center. This direct link allows personnel to respond faster in times of emergency. More than 2,000 U.P. addresses are protected by Direct Alarm.

For more information about Direct Alarm, go to the home page of the City's Web site at www.uptexas.org. If you are already a Direct Alarm subscriber, and you have questions about VoIP, call Lt. Keith Burks at 214-987-5372.