Homeowner Mastery™
A WORKING HOMEOWNER SYSTEM

KNOW MORE.
CARE FOR TODAY.
A STRONGER TOMORROW.

MASTERY BRIEF

Smart Home Technology

Understanding Technology in Your Home

Understand your options. Make informed choices. Use technology where it adds value to the way you live.



COMFORT
A home that works for you.

SAFETY
Greater awareness and control.

CONVENIENCE
Simpler routines for everyday life.

CONNECTIVITY
Bring it all together.

MANAGEMENT
Know what you have. Maintain and update it.

KNOWLEDGE → UNDERSTANDING → BETTER DECISIONS

Protecting Your Investment

EDUCATE.
UNDERSTAND.
MAINTAIN.
ENJOY.

CHAPTER 1 | THE BIG PICTURE

What Makes a Home "Smart"?

It's about using technology to make everyday living better.

A **smart home** uses connected devices and systems to help you control, monitor, and automate certain functions in and around your home. These technologies can make your home more comfortable, safer, more convenient, and easier to manage.

A smart home doesn't have to be high-tech or expensive. It can be as simple as a smart thermostat or video doorbell, or it can include multiple integrated systems. The goal isn't to have the "smartest" home — it's to use technology where it adds real value to your life.



A SMART HOME CAN HELP YOU:

COMFORT
Keep your home comfortable and more efficient.

SAFETY
Increase awareness and help protect what matters.

CONVENIENCE
Simplify daily tasks and save time.

CONNECTIVITY
Bring systems together so they work better.

MANAGEMENT
Know what you have, monitor performance, and maintain it.

KEY TAKEAWAY

A smart home isn't about having the latest gadgets. It's about using technology in ways that fit your home, your needs, and your lifestyle.

Start with the areas that matter most to you. You can always add more over time.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

- **You have options.** From simple, affordable devices to more advanced integrated systems.
- **You're in control.** You decide what to install, when to install it, and how it's used.
- **It can grow with you.** Start small and expand as your needs or budget change.
- **It should solve a real need.** Focus on technology that makes your home safer, more comfortable, more convenient, or easier to manage.
- **It's not required.** A home doesn't have to be "smart" to be a great home.

How Smart Devices Connect

Different devices use different methods — and some need more than one.

Smart devices communicate using a few common technologies. Some connect directly to your home Wi-Fi, some use Bluetooth, and others rely on a hub or bridge. A few devices can use more than one method. The connection type affects how the device is set up, how it's controlled, and what happens if your internet service is down.

You don't need to be a networking expert. You just need to understand what your device depends on in order to work, and how it fits into your home.



COMMON CONNECTION METHODS

Wi-Fi

Connects directly to your home network. Common for cameras, thermostats, and many other devices.

Bluetooth

Works at shorter range, often used for setup or devices that stay nearby (like locks or sensors).

Hub / Bridge

Some devices use a hub or bridge that helps compatible devices communicate with each other and, in many systems, connects them to your home network (for example, Zigbee or Z-Wave).

Ecosystem / Platform

Many devices work within a larger ecosystem (such as Amazon Alexa, Google Home, or Apple Home). Compatibility matters, especially if you plan to add more devices later.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Before adding a smart device, understand what it needs to connect, what controls it, and what happens if that connection is interrupted.

A little upfront knowledge helps you avoid frustration and makes it easier to build a system that works for your home.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

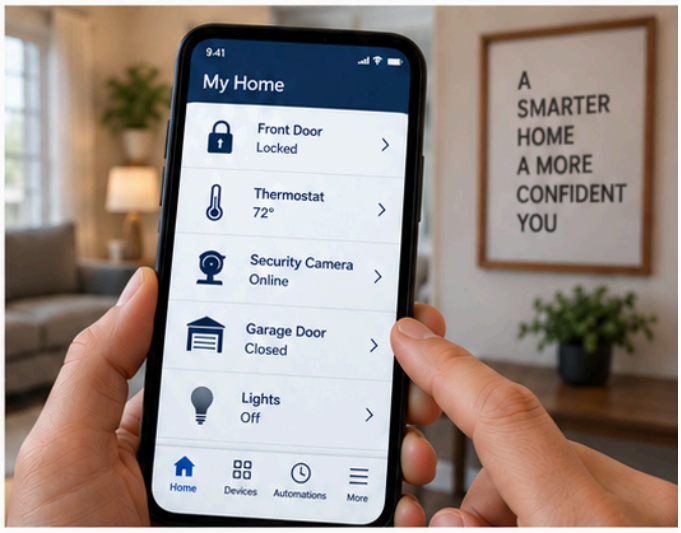
- **Check the requirements.** Know if the device needs Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, a hub, or a specific app.
- **Consider your network.** A strong, reliable Wi-Fi signal helps most smart devices work properly.
- **Plan for the unexpected.** Some devices may have limited functionality if your internet service is down.
- **Think about compatibility.** If you plan to add more devices, check that they will work together.
- **Read and keep the basics.** Save model information, apps used, and setup details in your home records for future reference.

Apps, Accounts and Control

Most smart devices are managed through an app — and often a user account.

Most smart devices are set up and controlled using a smartphone or tablet app. Many also require you to create a user account with the manufacturer or service provider. The app gives you access to features such as settings, alerts, schedules, and activity history.

Apps and accounts make smart devices convenient, but they also mean you're trusting your information to a company and connecting your device to the internet. It's worth understanding what that means so you can make informed decisions and keep your system secure.



WHAT APPS AND ACCOUNTS OFTEN PROVIDE

Device Control
Adjust settings, turn devices on or off, change modes, and manage features.

Alerts & Notifications
Receive notifications for events such as motion, door activity, temperature changes, or system issues.

Schedules & Automation
Set schedules or create routines (such as "away" or "good night") to fit your lifestyle.

Activity History
View past activity, such as who entered, when a door opened, or motion events, depending on the device.

Multiple Users
Allow family members or trusted people to access and manage devices, often with different permission levels.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Apps and accounts give you access to features and information, but they also involve sharing data and connecting your devices to the internet.

Understand how apps and accounts work so you can use smart devices in a way that fits your comfort level and security needs.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

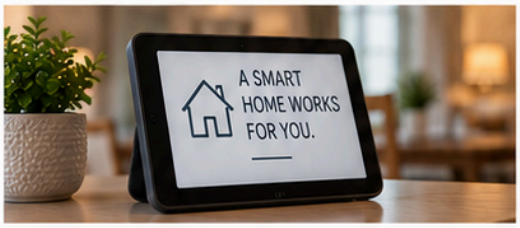
- **Read the basics.** Review the app permissions, privacy information, and terms of service.
- **Use strong passwords.** Choose unique passwords and consider two-step verification if available.
- **Decide what you're comfortable sharing.** Understand what information the company collects and how it's used.
- **Keep access up to date.** Remove access for people who no longer need it (such as past guests or service providers).
- **Plan for the long term.** Keep a secure record of which accounts, apps, and email addresses are associated with your smart-home devices. Never record passwords in an unsecured home record.

Where Smart Technology Fits in Your Home

Smart devices can be found throughout the home — inside and outside.

Smart technology isn't just for one part of the home. It can be used in many different areas to add convenience, comfort, security and peace of mind.

You don't need every device, and not everything needs to be connected. The key is understanding what's available and how each type of device can be useful for your home and your lifestyle.



WHAT SMART DEVICES CAN DO

Monitor
Tell you what's happening, such as temperature, motion, water leaks or door activity.

Alert
Let you know when something changes or needs attention.

Control
Allow you to take action remotely from your phone or a device.

Automate
Perform selected actions based on schedules or conditions.

Record
Keep a useful history so you can see what happened and when.

Integrate
Allow compatible devices to work together for added convenience and control.

ONE DEVICE CAN OFTEN DO MORE THAN ONE OF THESE THINGS.

COMMON AREAS AND EXAMPLES

Your home. Your needs. Your choices.



Comfort & Climate
Thermostats, ventilation, ceiling fans, humidifiers, dehumidifiers, HVAC controls.



Lighting & Power
Smart bulbs, switches, plugs, dimmers, outlets and whole-home lighting controls.



Entry & Access
Smart locks, video doorbells, garage door controllers, gates and keyless entry systems.



Security & Awareness
Cameras, motion sensors, contact sensors, alarm systems, smoke/CO integration and monitoring.



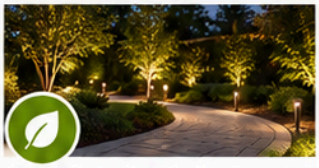
Water & Property Protection
Leak sensors, water shutoff devices, sump pump alerts and smart irrigation systems.



Kitchen & Cooking
Smart ovens and ranges, refrigerators, dishwashers, cooking thermometers and other connected appliances.



Everyday Living
Smart speakers, TVs, blinds/shades, vacuums, air purifiers and other connected devices.



Outdoor & Property
Outdoor lighting, irrigation controls, cameras, EV chargers and other outdoor devices.

KEY TAKEAWAY —— Smart technology can add real value, but it's a tool — not a requirement. Start with the areas that matter most to you, and choose devices that solve a need, make life easier, or provide useful information.

Security, Privacy and Peace of Mind

Smart devices can make life easier — and it's important to keep them secure.

Smart devices connect to the internet, which means they can be convenient and useful, but they can also be a target for security risks. Good habits and a few simple steps can help protect your devices, your data, and your home.

You don't need to be a cybersecurity expert. You just need to be aware of the basics and take practical steps. A little prevention goes a long way toward keeping your smart home working the way you want — safely and reliably.



PRACTICAL WAYS TO STAY SECURE

Use Strong Passwords

Choose unique passwords for each account and use two-step verification if available.

Keep Devices Updated

Install app and device updates when available. Updates often include important security improvements.

Secure Your Wi-Fi Network

Use a strong password for your Wi-Fi network and consider a separate network for smart devices if your router allows it.

Manage Permissions

Review what information the app or device needs. Only allow access to features that are necessary for the device to work.

Be Mindful of Placement

Consider where devices with cameras or microphones are located, and whether you're comfortable with them in that area.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Smart devices can add convenience, comfort, and even safety to your home. With a few simple precautions, you can enjoy the benefits while reducing risk.

Security and privacy aren't about living in fear. They're about being informed, making thoughtful choices, and keeping your home and personal information protected.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- **Know what the device does.** Understand its features, how it connects, and what data it may collect.
- **Review privacy settings.** Adjust settings in the app to match your comfort level.
- **Limit access.** Only share access with people you trust, and remove access when it's no longer needed.
- **Be aware of data use.** Understand how your information is used and whether it can be shared with third parties.
- **Stay informed.** Security practices and privacy options change over time, so check for updates periodically.

Smart Security Cameras

Awareness, Monitoring and Peace of Mind

Smart security cameras help you keep an eye on your home from anywhere. They let you see live video, receive alerts and review recorded footage on your phone, tablet or computer. While they can add convenience and peace of mind, they're not a complete security system, and they work best as part of a broader home safety plan.



What Smart Security Cameras Can Do

Features vary by brand and model, but many smart cameras offer:

Live Video
View real-time video from your phone, tablet or computer.

Motion Alerts
Receive notifications when motion is detected.

Video Recording
Store video clips in the cloud and/or on a local storage device.

Night Vision
See clearly in low light or complete darkness.

Two-Way Audio
Talk and listen through the camera using your phone.

Indoor and Outdoor Options
Choose models designed for indoor use, outdoor use, or both.

Integration With Your Smart Home
Work with other devices like smart lights, door locks and alarms.

Why Homeowners Choose Smart Cameras

- Monitor your home when you're away
- Help deter theft or vandalism
- Keep an eye on deliveries, visitors and activity
- Check on pets, family members or caregivers
- Provide useful evidence if an incident occurs
- Can integrate with other smart home devices

Things to Consider

- Requires Wi-Fi and a reliable internet connection.
- Many useful features (such as video storage or advanced alerts) may require a subscription.
- Consider where video is stored and review the manufacturer's privacy policy.
- Be aware of local laws, HOA rules and neighbor privacy when placing cameras.
- Outdoor cameras need a weather-rated model and proper placement to avoid false alerts.
- Power options vary (battery, plug-in or hardwired); battery models require periodic charging.
- Cameras can be helpful, but they are not a complete security system.

HM Tip

Think about what you want to monitor and place cameras strategically. Focus on key areas like entry points, driveways and delivery areas. Use strong passwords and enable two-factor authentication to help protect your account.

Technology can add security, but the best protection still comes from a well-maintained home and good habits.

Smart Thermostats

Comfort, Efficiency and Control

Smart thermostats help you manage your home's heating and cooling system with greater convenience and control. They can learn your preferences, adjust automatically, and often be controlled from your phone. Like any technology, they're not right for every home, but when matched to your needs, a smart thermostat can improve comfort, help manage energy use and make everyday life a little easier.



What Smart Thermostats Do

Features vary by brand and model, but many smart thermostats can:

Learn Your Schedule
Adjust automatically based on your routine and preferences.

Remote Control
Change settings from your phone, tablet or computer.

Help Manage Energy Use
Optimize heating and cooling to reduce unnecessary runtime.

Integrate With Your Smart Home
Work with other devices like smart locks, lighting or voice assistants.

Usage Reports
Show heating and cooling patterns and system runtime.

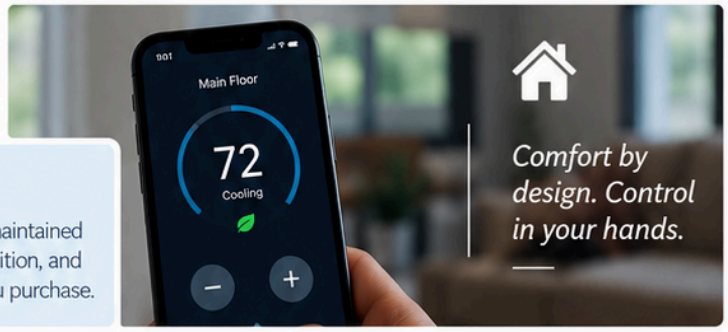
Alerts and Notifications
Some models can warn you of unusual temperature changes or system issues.

Why Homeowners Choose Smart Thermostats

- Greater comfort and more consistent temperatures
- Remote control when you're away
- Potential for lower energy costs
- Easy schedule adjustments for changing routines
- Integration with other smart home devices
- Helpful for second homes or rental properties

Things to Consider

- Requires Wi-Fi and a stable internet connection
- May require a common wire (C-wire) for power
- Not all systems or HVAC equipment are compatible
- Some features require a subscription
- Your data and usage patterns are stored online
- Still works best when your HVAC system is properly sized, installed and maintained
- Consider what happens if your internet or power is down



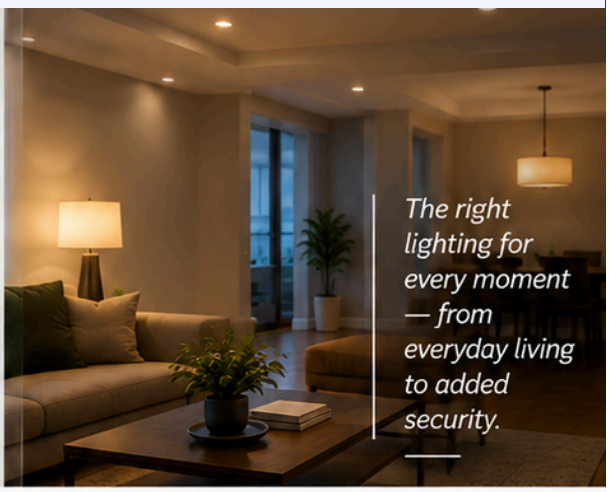
HM Tip

A smart thermostat won't fix an inefficient or poorly maintained HVAC system. Make sure your system is in good condition, and confirm compatibility with your equipment before you purchase.

Smart Lighting

Convenience, Ambiance and Control

Smart lighting gives you more control over how you light your home. You can adjust brightness, change colors, set schedules and control lights from your phone or with your voice. It can add convenience, improve security and create the right atmosphere for everyday living. Like any technology, it's not the right fit for every home, but when used thoughtfully, it can be a simple and effective upgrade.



What Smart Lighting Can Do

Features vary by brand and system, but many smart lighting products allow you to:

Adjust Brightness and Color
Set the right light level and color temperature for any activity or mood.

Set Schedules
Turn lights on or off automatically, even when you're not home.

Control Remotely
Use a phone app, voice assistant or smart hub to control your lights from anywhere.

Integrate With Your Smart Home
Work with other devices like door locks, thermostats or security systems (e.g., lights on when a door unlocks).

Add Security
Create the appearance of an occupied home with automated lighting.

Save Energy
Use LED smart bulbs and schedules to reduce unnecessary lighting.

Why Homeowners Choose Smart Lighting

- Greater convenience and control
- Create the right lighting for different activities
- Can improve home security
- May reduce energy use with LEDs and schedules
- Easy to adjust for seasons, holidays or special events
- Works with other smart home devices

Things to Consider

- Most smart lighting requires Wi-Fi, Bluetooth or a smart hub.
- Some features may require a subscription.
- Compatibility can vary between brands and platforms.
- Smart bulbs and switches can be more expensive than standard options.
- If your internet or power is down, connected features won't work (manual control usually still works).
- Too many different apps can be confusing.
- Consider whether you need color-changing lights or if simple dimmable white light meets your needs.

HM Tip

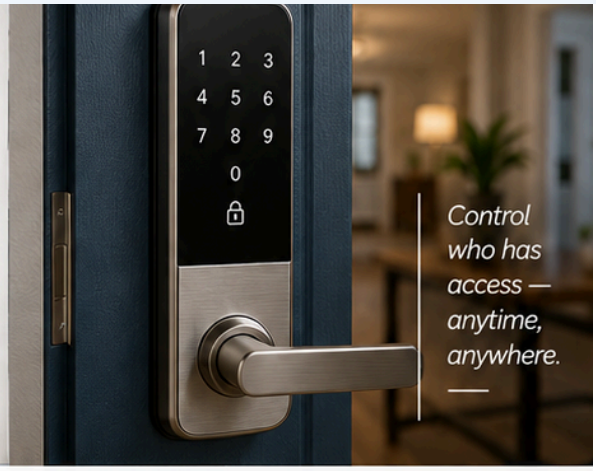
Start small. Try smart lighting in one room to see how it fits your routine. Choose products that work with the platform you already use and keep a simple manual switch option whenever possible.

A smart home should still be a functional home when the technology isn't being smart.

Smart Door Locks

Convenience, Access and Peace of Mind

Smart door locks let you lock and unlock your doors using a code, your phone, a key fob or sometimes your voice. They can make everyday life more convenient, help you manage access for family, guests or service providers, and add a layer of security. Like any technology, they're not right for every home, but when used thoughtfully, they can be a simple and effective upgrade.



What Smart Door Locks Can Do

Features vary by brand and model, but many smart locks offer:

Keyless Entry
Lock and unlock using a code, your phone, a key fob or sometimes your voice.

Remote Access
Lock or unlock your door from anywhere using a phone app.

Temporary Access
Create one-time or time-limited codes for guests, family members, or service providers (such as cleaners or contractors).

Activity History
View a log of when your door was locked or unlocked and by whom (depending on the model).

Notifications
Receive alerts when your door is locked, unlocked or if there is an unusual activity attempt.

Backup Options
Most smart locks also have a physical key so you can still get in if the battery is low or the technology isn't working.

Why Homeowners Choose Smart Locks

- Added convenience in everyday life
- Easier access for family, guests or service providers
- Helps you manage access when you're away
- Can improve home security
- Useful for short-term rentals or occasional visitors
- Can integrate with other smart home devices

Things to Consider

- Require a reliable battery; plan to replace batteries on schedule and watch for low-battery alerts.
- Connected features (remote access and alerts) depend on your home network and internet service.
- Make sure the lock fits your door and works with your existing hardware.
- Consider what happens if the power or internet is down (you can usually still use a code or a key).
- Review the manufacturer's privacy policy and understand how your data is stored and used.
- Be aware of local laws, HOA rules or rental requirements.
- Compare features and costs; some useful features may require a subscription.

HM Tip

Think through who will need access, how you'll manage codes and how you'll handle low batteries or a network outage. Start with one exterior door to see how it fits your routine before adding more.

Smart locks can add convenience and security, but they work best when you also maintain good door security and overall home safety habits.

Smart Video Doorbells

See, Talk and Know Who's at Your Door

Smart video doorbells let you see, hear and speak with visitors at your door from your phone, tablet or computer. They can help you know who's there, monitor deliveries, and add convenience and peace of mind. While they can improve your home's security and awareness, they're not a replacement for a complete security system.



What Smart Video Doorbells Can Do

Features vary by brand and model, but many smart doorbells offer:

Live Video
See who's at your door in real time using your phone, tablet or computer.

Two-Way Audio
Talk and listen to visitors, delivery people or others at your door.

Motion Alerts
Receive notifications when motion is detected at your door.

Package Awareness
Keep an eye on deliveries and reduce the risk of package theft.

Day and Night Viewing
See clearly in different lighting conditions, including at night.

Remote Access
Check your door from anywhere using a mobile app.

Wired or Battery Options
Choose a model that fits your home. Some use your existing doorbell wiring, while others run on batteries.

Integration With Your Smart Home
Can work with other devices like smart locks, cameras and voice assistants.

Why Homeowners Choose Video Doorbells

- Know who's at the door before opening it
- Add convenience for deliveries and visitors
- Help deter unwanted activity
- Monitor your home when you're away
- Useful for short-term rentals or occasional visitors
- Can integrate with other smart home devices

Things to Consider

- Most features (like video storage and advanced alerts) may require a subscription.
- Wired models usually need a compatible doorbell transformer; battery models need periodic charging.
- Connected features (remote access and alerts) depend on your home network and internet service.
- Consider where the camera views and how it may capture neighbors, sidewalks or shared spaces.
- Review the manufacturer's privacy policy and understand how video is stored and used.
- Be aware of local laws, HOA rules or rental requirements.
- If your internet or power is down, you may still be able to use the doorbell button (if wired), but remote features may not be available.
- Compare features and costs to find the best fit for your home and needs.

HM Tip

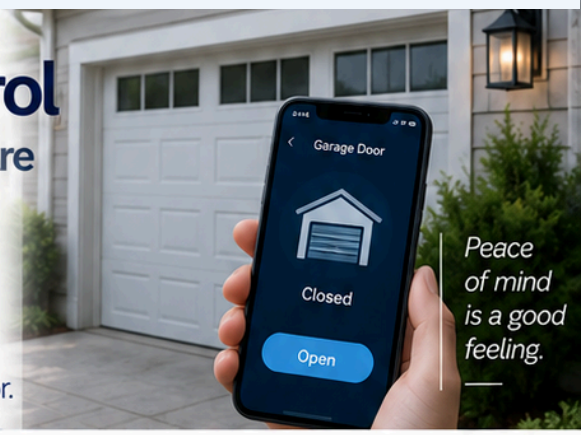
Think about the areas you want to monitor, such as your front door, porch, driveway or package delivery area. Check your existing doorbell wiring and Wi-Fi signal strength before purchasing, and choose a model that fits your home and lifestyle.

A smart video doorbell can add convenience and security, but the best protection still comes from a well-maintained home and good habits.

Smart Garage Door Control

Know Whether It's Open, Wherever You Are

Smart garage door controllers let you check the status of your garage door, open or close it remotely, and receive alerts on your phone. They can add convenience, improve awareness and help you manage access for family, guests or service providers. While they're a useful upgrade, smart technology cannot fix a poorly operating or unsafe garage door.



What Smart Garage Door Control Can Do

Features vary by brand and model, but many smart garage door systems offer:

Remote Open and Close
Open or close your garage door from anywhere using a phone app.

Real-Time Status
Check whether your garage door is open or closed.

Alerts and Notifications
Receive alerts when the door is opened, closed or left open for a set period of time.

Schedules and Auto-Close
Some models let you set schedules or automatically close the door after a certain time.

Guest and Family Access
Grant temporary or permanent access to family members, guests or service providers.

Delivery-Friendly Features
Some systems can work with delivery services for in-garage package delivery (where supported).

Integration With Your Smart Home
Can often work with other devices like security cameras, smart lighting and voice assistants.

Why Homeowners Choose Smart Garage Control

- Convenience and peace of mind
- Know if the door is open or closed
- Manage access for family, guests or service providers
- Receive alerts when you're away
- Useful for short-term rentals or occasional visitors
- Can integrate with other smart home devices

Things to Consider

- Check if your existing garage door opener is compatible. Some models require a separate smart controller.
- Your garage needs a reliable Wi-Fi signal. Signal strength in the garage can be weaker than inside the house.
- Smart controls work with your existing safety sensors. They do not replace them and will not make an unsafe door safe.
- Smart technology can tell you what your garage door is doing. It cannot correct a door that is improperly balanced, damaged or unsafe.
- Consider what happens if your internet or power is down. You can still use the wall switch or remote, and the manual release is always available.
- Some models offer battery backup, keeping limited function during a power outage.
- Review the manufacturer's privacy policy and understand how your data is stored and used.
- Be aware of local laws, HOA rules or rental requirements.
- Compare features and costs to find the best fit for your home and needs.

HM Tip

Before purchasing, check your opener's compatibility, confirm Wi-Fi signal strength in the garage, and make sure your door is in good operating condition. A smart controller adds convenience, but it works best with a well-maintained, safe garage door system.

Smart garage door control can add convenience and awareness, but the best protection still comes from a well-maintained and safe garage door.

Leak & Water Sensors

Small Devices. Big Peace of Mind.

Leak and water sensors can alert you to unwanted water before it becomes a major problem. They monitor for moisture in areas where leaks are common and send notifications to your phone, tablet or computer. While they can't prevent every water issue, they can give you an early warning so you can take action and potentially avoid significant damage and cost.



What Leak & Water Sensors Can Do

Features vary by brand and model, but many leak sensors offer:

Detect Water and Moisture
Sense the presence of water in areas where leaks are likely.

Alerts and Notifications
Send instant alerts to your phone, tablet or computer when water is detected.

Early Warning
Help you catch leaks early, before they cause significant damage.

Battery or Plug-In Options
Many models use long-life batteries; some plug into an outlet.

Works With Your Network
Connects to your home Wi-Fi (some use a hub). You'll need a reliable signal in the area where the sensor is located.

Multiple Sensor Placement
Place sensors in high-risk areas such as water heaters, washing machines, sinks, toilets, HVAC condensate lines, sump pumps and under appliances.

Integration With Your Smart Home
Can often work with other devices like smart shut-off valves, security systems and voice assistants.

Activity History
Some systems keep a log of alerts and sensor activity in the app.

Why Homeowners Choose Leak Sensors

- Helps protect your home and belongings
- Gives you peace of mind when you're away
- Useful for primary homes and rental properties
- Can alert you to small issues before they become big ones
- May help reduce repair costs and disruption
- Can integrate with other smart home devices
- Relatively easy to install and relocate

Things to Consider

- Place sensors where leaks are most likely, such as water heaters, washing machines, dishwashers, refrigerators, sinks, toilets, HVAC condensate lines and sump pumps.
- Ensure a reliable Wi-Fi signal in the sensor's location. A weak signal may delay or prevent notifications.
- Battery-powered sensors require periodic battery replacements. Check battery life and low-battery alerts.
- Some systems require a hub or subscription for certain features (such as remote alerts or advanced monitoring).
- Sensors detect water, but they do not stop the water. Consider a smart shut-off valve for additional protection.
- Keep sensors clean and test them periodically (see the manufacturer's instructions).
- Be aware of placement limitations. Sensors work best on flat surfaces and may not detect slow leaks until water reaches them.
- Review the manufacturer's privacy policy and understand how your data is stored and used.
- Compare features and costs to find the best fit for your home and needs.

HM Tip

Think about the areas in your home where a small leak could cause a big problem. Start with high-risk locations, and consider pairing leak sensors with a smart shut-off valve for an added layer of protection.

Leak sensors can give you an early warning, but the best protection comes from a well-maintained home and addressing issues before they start.

Smart Electrical & Energy Monitoring

Understand Your Use. Make Informed Decisions.

Smart electrical and energy monitoring devices can show you how your home is using electricity. They provide real-time and historical usage information, can help you identify unusually high consumption, and may help you make adjustments to save energy and money. While these tools are useful, they do not replace electrical inspection, maintenance or professional diagnosis.



Three Levels of Monitoring

Different devices provide different levels of information.

1 Smart Plugs
Single Device



- Monitor individual devices or appliances
- Show real-time and historical usage
- Typically easy for homeowners to install

2 Circuit Monitoring
Multiple Circuits



- Monitor selected circuits in your panel
- Help identify which circuits use the most electricity
- Installation may require a qualified professional

3 Whole-Home Energy Monitoring



- Tracks total home energy use (and may identify major loads)
- Provides detailed usage data and trends.
- Typically installed in or near the electrical panel (usually by a professional)

What Can You Learn?

Energy monitoring can give you useful information, such as:

Current Usage
See how much electricity your home is using right now.

Usage Trends
View daily, weekly or monthly patterns.

High Energy Use
Identify unusually high consumption, which may indicate a problem or an appliance running longer than expected.

Which Devices Are Running
See when certain appliances or systems are on (some systems can estimate device-level use).

Opportunities to Save
Find ways to reduce energy use and potentially lower your utility bills.

Benefits for Homeowners

- Helps you understand how your home uses electricity
- Can identify unexpected or unusually high usage
- Useful for primary homes and rental properties
- May help you make more informed decisions about appliances, HVAC settings and energy habits
- Integrates with other smart home devices and apps
- Supports cost awareness and energy efficiency

Important Things to Consider

Energy monitoring is not the same as electrical safety monitoring.
High energy use does not mean a wiring defect, and these devices cannot determine if your electrical system is safe.

Installation varies.
Smart plugs are simple for most homeowners. Circuit or whole-home monitors often require installation inside or around the electrical panel, which may require a qualified professional.

Data depends on connectivity.
A Wi-Fi or internet connection is needed for most smart features. If the internet is down, local data may still be available, but remote access and notifications may not work.

Compare features and costs.
Look for the features that fit your needs. Avoid paying for more than you'll use.

These tools provide information, not a repair solution.
If you see unusual usage or have electrical concerns, contact a qualified electrician.

HM Tip

Use energy monitoring along with good habits—like turning off unused devices and maintaining your HVAC system—to get the most benefit.

Energy data can tell you how your home is using electricity. It does not replace electrical inspection, maintenance or professional diagnosis.

Smart Smoke & Carbon Monoxide Alarms

Early Warnings. Greater Peace of Mind.

Smart smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms do what traditional alarms do—detect a problem and sound an alarm—but they also can send notifications to your phone, tablet or computer. They help keep you informed, even when you're away, and can provide an earlier opportunity to take action.



Important alerts, whether you're home or away.

Key Benefits of Smart Alarms

Features vary by brand and model, but smart alarms can offer:

Remote Notifications
Receive alerts on your phone, tablet or computer when smoke or CO is detected.

Interconnected Alarms
When one alarm sounds, all alarms in the system can sound, helping everyone in the home hear the alert.

Voice and Location Alerts
Some models announce the type of hazard (e.g., "Smoke detected in the kitchen") and the location, when available.

Battery or Hardwired Models
Options include long-life sealed batteries, replaceable batteries, or hardwired units with battery backup.

Works With Your Network
Connects to your home Wi-Fi (some systems use a hub) to send notifications and enable additional features.

Additional Features
Some models offer self-testing, low-battery alerts, hush from your phone and integration with other smart home devices.

Why Homeowners Choose Smart Alarms

- Helps keep your family and home safer
- Provides alerts when you're away
- Can reduce response time in an emergency
- Useful for primary homes and rental properties
- May help protect pets when you're not home
- Can integrate with other smart home devices
- Relatively easy to install and add to your home

Know the Difference

Smoke Alarms

- Detect smoke from a fire.
- Help provide early warning so you can get out safely.
- Use either ionization, photoelectric or dual sensor technology (depending on the model).
- Should be installed on every level of the home, inside bedrooms and outside sleeping areas.

Carbon Monoxide Alarms

- Detect carbon monoxide (CO), a colorless, odorless gas.
- CO can come from fuel-burning appliances like furnaces, water heaters, fireplaces, stoves and generators.
- Should be installed according to the manufacturer's instructions and local codes, typically on each level of the home and near sleeping areas.

Things to Consider

- Ensure proper placement and follow the manufacturer's installation instructions and local building codes.
- Test alarms regularly and keep them clean (see manufacturer's instructions).
- Replace alarms according to the manufacturer's recommended service life (typically 7–10 years, depending on the model).
- A reliable Wi-Fi signal is needed for notifications. If internet or power is down, alarms will still sound locally, but remote alerts may not be sent.
- Smart features do not replace the need for properly installed, functioning alarms.
- Compare features and costs to find the best fit for your home and needs.

Common Locations

Follow manufacturer guidance and local codes.









HM Tip

Test your alarms at least monthly, know when to replace them, and make sure everyone in your home understands the sound and what to do if an alarm goes off.

The smart feature is the notification. The protection still begins with properly placed, functioning alarms.

Before You Make Your Home Smarter

A Simple Framework for Better Decisions.

Smart home technology can add convenience, comfort, safety and valuable information—but only when it fits your home, your needs and your lifestyle. Use this framework to ask the right questions, avoid common pitfalls and choose solutions that truly make your home better.



Six Key Questions to Ask

1 Need

What problem am I solving?

- Is there a specific need or concern I want to address?
- Will this actually make my home safer, more secure, more comfortable or more efficient?
- Is it a "want," or a real benefit for my home and household?

2 Compatibility

Will it work with what I already have?

- Does it work with my existing home systems and equipment (e.g., HVAC, garage door, locks, Wi-Fi)?
- Will it integrate with other devices and platforms I plan to use?
- Am I locking myself into a single brand or ecosystem?

3 Connectivity

What happens if the internet or power is down?

- Does it require Wi-Fi, the internet or a hub to function?
- What features still work if the internet or power is out?
- Is there a local control option (e.g., keypad, manual operation, physical switch)?

4 Privacy

What information does it collect?

- What data does the device collect (video, audio, location, usage, etc.)?
- Where is the data stored and who can access it?
- Can I control privacy settings, and do I understand the manufacturer's policies?

5 Backup

Is there a manual or conventional option?

- Can I still operate the device manually if needed?
- Will the core home system (e.g., door, thermostat, alarm) still work without the smart features?
- Do I understand how to use it if the app, internet or power is not available?

6 Cost

What are the total costs over time?

- What is the purchase and installation cost?
- Is a subscription required? What does it include?
- Are there ongoing fees for cloud storage, advanced features or app access?
- Does the long-term value justify the cost for my situation?

Avoid an App Collection

Keep it simple and manageable.

- Too many separate apps can be confusing and frustrating.
- When possible, choose devices that work within the same app or ecosystem.
- Fewer apps, accounts and subscriptions make your home easier to manage.

Plan for the Future

Think beyond today.

- Consider how your needs may change over time.
- Will the device still be supported?
- Can it be easily updated or expanded?
- Will it remain a good fit if you sell your home?

Consider Homeownership Transitions

Make it easier for the next owner.

- Before selling your home, remove devices from your accounts or transfer them to the new owner.
- Factory-reset devices when needed.
- Leave instructions for any devices you're including.
- Consider what will stay, what you'll take, and how it will be documented.

Final Thoughts

Technology is a tool—not a replacement.

- Smart home devices add another layer of convenience, information and peace of mind.
- They do not replace the underlying home systems, proper maintenance or professional service when needed.
- The goal is a home that is safer, more comfortable, more efficient and easier to manage—without making it more complicated.

The smartest home isn't the one with the most technology.

It's the one where technology solves real problems without making the home harder to understand, maintain or operate.

A WORKING HOMEOWNER SYSTEM