ESA DIY Positioning Statement

- ESA recommends consumers carefully evaluate their home security needs to ensure they select a security system that best fits their lifestyle and security requirements. A family with three school-aged children living in a close-knit residential community may have vastly different security needs than a newlywed couple living in a townhouse.

- The DIY market has expanded options for consumers and is becoming increasingly relevant in the home security market. Some people are innately savvy and may prefer a DIY system. However, those who are not mechanically and technically skilled often prefer a customized, professionally installed, and monitored system.

- Many ESA members offer a "hybrid" DIY option for consumers who like the DIY concept, but prefer guidance with the installation, as well as professional 24-hour monitoring.

- Advances in smart home security technologies, such as video doorbells, are enabling security providers to expand the range of options and prices available to consumers. These technological innovations are also making it easier than ever for consumers to customize security systems that integrate home security into their lifestyle – whether it is a DIY or professionally-installed system.

- When considering a DIY system, it's important for consumers to know that an effective security system is comprised of many different components. It's not just a video doorbell or a video surveillance camera – it is multiple security technologies working together to provide the level of security that best fits a consumer's needs.

  → A video doorbell, combined with video and audio surveillance, motion detectors, window and door sensors – along with lighting control and professional monitoring – provides multiple layers of security. When connected with technologies that can alert consumers to unexpected activity and enable viewing via a smart phone, a consumer can detect and deter criminal activity before it happens. Other such examples are technologies that allow a homeowner to remotely arm and disarm their security system – as well as the ability to remotely view what is taking place in the home while away.

  → Such features, with the addition of audio or video verification that permits a monitoring service to hear or see what is taking place if an alarm is triggered, exponentially increase the ability to better secure both home and property, prevent false dispatches and provide first responders with crucial information. It's also important to ensure working smoke detectors are integrated into a security system so that authorities can be quickly alerted in the event of fire.

→ Additionally, professionally installed, integrated systems have the benefit of operating on apps and infrastructure built for the reliability.

→ Professional installers can explain these best practices in person so a consumer can make an informed decision about the security system that best fits their needs — whether it's DIY or professionally-installed.

→ Another advantage of using a professional company such as an ESA member is they work with these systems day-in and day-out and are well equipped with best practices in cyber security. Member companies represent more than 70 percent of the market for intrusion and fire/life safety systems, access control, video surveillance and monitoring. All member companies are expected to adhere to a strict Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct to ensure high quality work and services.

■ Whether a consumer chooses an off-the-shelf DIY option or professional installation, ESA urges consumers to always change the passwords to their security system and any internet-connected devices. Consumers should select a password that is difficult for hackers, using a combination of letters, characters and numbers. Don't retain the username or password that came with the system or device.

■ Consumers can find an ESA member security company near them by going to Alarm.org and typing in their zip code under "Locate a Security Company" on the homepage. From there, you can narrow down mile radius, and service type. Then a list is provided with all ESA member companies in the area with information on how to contact them.