

Guardian Security Systems, Inc.

Alaska-owned and operated since 1974

Happy New Year!

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Update Policy:

Changes must be made in writing. A telephone followup to verify your identify with your passcode must occur *before* changes take effect.

Plan accordingly for contact list updates, or your personal contact information.

Changes can be made via mail, email, the website, or at the main office in Anchorage.

Expect a phone call verification of these changes.

It's our policy to protect your account at all times.

Update online at <https://www.guardiansecuritysystems.com/support/update-emergency-contact-list/>

Enjoying Winter with *Hygge*!

Some people ski. Some skate, or go sledding or ice fishing. But winter is still winter, and maybe we could all use a little help getting by.

Hygge (pronounced HYOO-guh) is a Danish word loosely and somewhat inaccurately translated as "coziness." It has to do with a sense of warmth, community, and simplicity. Citizens of Denmark have mastered the art of feeling content and fulfilled during the dark days of winter. In fact, Denmark is currently the happiest country on earth, according to the World Happiness Report, despite a climate that is cold and dark much of the year (Denmark, as well as much of Alaska, is on the 55th parallel). *Hygge* might be of use to Alaskans as winter creeps along.

Darkness and cold temperatures have the potential to bring on feelings of lethargy, sadness, and even depression. This is where coziness comes in. When Danish citizens were recently asked to describe *hygge*, most could not fully express it in

English. However, many could describe what it was: a cup of coffee enjoyed with candles burning; coffee and chocolate while watching TV curled up in a blanket; having friends over and building a fire. One person said cakes and sweets, and other indulgences, like chocolate or wine, that make the home atmosphere cozy.

The key isn't to come up with an extravagant plan, one that might get too complicated to actually pull off, but instead to seek the simple comforts of being home, enjoying friends, and warming up on a cold winter's night.

To stave off the winter blues, and to spur yourself and others along through winter, consider bringing an element of *hygge* into your home. Have a bonfire and invite friends over for hot chocolate. Host a dessert tasting or a movie night. Or light some candles and enjoy the soft yellow glow. Spring is on the way, but in the meantime, enjoy winter opportunities both inside and out! Stay warm!

New Year's Traditions

In America, we watch a ball drop in Times Square at midnight. Most of us watch it on TV, if we manage to stay up that late, but some people actually travel to New York to count down, watch the ball drop, and ring in the New Year. In Alaska, we enjoy fireworks at New Year's, partly because it's finally dark enough to actually see them, unlike Independence Day, where dim fireworks against a twilight sky are the best we can manage.

Other cultures and communities celebrate New Year's in their own unique ways, but there are some common characteristics as well. For example, it seems most everyone likes to make noise. Many children grow up banging pots and pans in the driveway and bellowing "Happy New Year!" into the night. Early American colonists fired pistols into the air to make noise, and ancient Chinese cultures lit firecrackers to scare demons away. In Europe, church bells are rung, drums are beaten, sirens are sounded, and all over the world, party horns are blasted.

There are also many traditions surrounding lucky food. In the United States, Hoppin' John, a stew-type dish made with black-eyed peas, is traditional New Year's fare. The key is the apparent good luck of eating black-eyed peas. Try your luck with Hoppin' John; we've included a recipe for you!

In the Netherlands, people eat ring-shaped treats, like doughnuts. In Spain, revelers eat 12 grapes at midnight, and are supposed to eat one at each chime of the clock.

New Year's resolutions reportedly were began by the Babylonians as early as 2600 BC.

If you are Irish and want to find a husband, mistletoe leaves are placed under your pillow on New Year's Eve.

In Denmark, people go over to the neighbor's and throw dishes at the door, breaking them into pieces on the porch. It is thought that the more broken dishes you have on your stoop, the more fortune you'll have in the coming year.

In Scotland, in the December 31st Festival of Hogmany, men parade through the streets carrying balls of fire and swinging them around. The tradition is meant for purification and dates back to the days of Vikings.

And in some parts of Central and South America, people wear lucky underwear on New Year's. Yellow is worn to bring wealth, and red for love.

No matter how you celebrate the new year, Guardian wishes you a happy and safe 2016. If we can further contribute to your safety and security in any way, please give us a call.

New Year's revelers in the Philippines wear polka dots, eat round food, and jingle coins in their pockets in hopes of bringing wealth in the New Year!

Anchorage
274-5275

Mat-Su Valley
376-4700

Kenai Peninsula
283-5652

Fairbanks
459-5275

Statewide
1-800-478-1898

Hoppin' John

Enjoy this easy New Year's Tradition!

- 1/4 c. butter
- 1 onion, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 bell pepper, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 4 cups black-eyed peas**
- 5 cups chicken broth
- 1 ham hock
- salt and pepper to taste
- cayenne pepper to taste
- 2 tbs. white vinegar
- cooked white rice



**Soak black-eyed peas in cool water overnight or for at least 6 hours, then cook until tender. Or use canned beans.

Heat butter in a large pot over medium-high heat. Add onion, garlic, green pepper, and celery and stir. Cook for 4 minutes. Stir in beans, then add chicken broth, ham hock, salt & pepper, and cayenne to taste. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and cover the pot for 30 minutes. Check the liquid level; if it's soupy, cook with the lid off for 15 minutes. If it's too thick, add broth. Stir in vinegar, and taste, adjusting spices as needed. Serve over rice.

How to Test your System

If you've heard it once, you've heard it a thousand times: your alarm system won't do you any good if it isn't functioning properly. And how would you know, unless you tested it? Which is why Guardian recommends a monthly test to verify the proper functioning of all components of your alarm system. For real. No kidding. Every month. So start 2016 off right with a test of your system. There are several steps, but none is difficult. Set aside about thirty minutes of your day, and have your phone

and security code handy. First, call Guardian so they know you are conducting a test. Then you will activate components of your system one by one, and call the Central Station each time to verify the proper signals were received.

If something is amiss, this is the time to find out and rectify the situation.

Consider this as important as testing and changing the batteries in smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors. Protect your family and your home by regularly ensuring your security alarm system works as it should.

Speaking of smoke and CO detectors, if you don't already have an established routine, New Year's is a good time to install fresh batteries. Safety first!



Time for a Security Upgrade? Take This Quiz to Find Out!

1. Did a company other than Guardian install the system?
2. Does your system rely on a landline for service?
3. Can you activate and deactivate important security components from your phone?
4. Do you want the ease and convenience of a touchscreen control panel in your home?
5. Could you save money and add to your sense of security by automating the lighting around your home and driveway?
6. Do you have too many household timers for heating and lighting? Want to consolidate?
7. Would you feel better with a camera on 24/7 monitoring key areas of your home?
8. Are you interested in radio-transmitted signals (for example, no cell service in your cabin)?
9. Would your property be better protected with environmental security, such as water or cold sensors?
10. If your system goes into alarm, do you want an actual person to respond and quickly assess the situation?

If you answered yes to two or more, call a security consultant today and learn about which of the latest technology options would be of benefit to you! We're Guardian, and we're here to serve!

Around Alaska

22nd Annual Great Alaska Beer and Barley Wine Festival, Anchorage. Egan Center. January 22-23, 6-10pm. Over 200 beers and barley wines from 50 local crafters. \$45 includes commemorative tasting cup, 30 tastes, event program. www.auroraproductions.net for more information.

Adult Cross Country Ski Lessons, Mat-Su, Saturdays, 10-11:30am. Government Peak Recreation Area or Archangel Trail. Punchcards available; drop-ins \$12. Register at www.matsuski.org; call 907-376-2169 for more information.

Backcountry Film Festival, Fairbanks, Birch Hill Cross Country Ski Center. January 23 or 30. Enjoy an evening of films with a backcountry theme. www.nscfairbanks.org for more.

Peninsula Winter Games, Soldotna, January 24, 12-5:30pm. Soldotna Regional Sports Complex. Brings the kids out to enjoy sports, games, and kid-friendly events. Giant ice sculpture slide!! Free lunch and dinner provided. <http://visitsoldotna.com/chamber/events/peninsula-winter-games/> for more information.