

# BBB: Gives tips for purchasing a video doorbell

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*Milwaukee, Wis.* – **Smart doorbells make it easier to keep an eye on your home while you are away.** But finding the right option for your house or apartment can be tricky. Be sure to consider the following tips when shopping for a video doorbell. Also, learn how to protect your new doorbell from hackers and steer clear of tech scams.

## How to purchase a video doorbell

- **Know your power source.** If you have an existing doorbell, check to see if it is hardwired or battery powered. If it is connected to two small wires, it's hardwired. This means you can purchase a hardwired video doorbell and use the existing connection with relative ease. If there are no wires, or you've never had a doorbell installed, a battery-powered video doorbell will be the easiest option. Keep in mind that battery-powered doorbells must be recharged, but they stay on if your power goes out. Hardwired doorbells never need charging. But if your power goes out, they stop working, too.
- **Think about video storage.** Doorbell cameras start recording when someone approaches your doorstep or a car or animal passes by. Some cameras house mini SD memory cards to save these recorded events for later viewing, but memory cards can only store so much data. You may want to pay for a cloud service that uses WiFi to save every event the camera records. If you don't pay for cloud storage and the video doorbell doesn't have internal memory space, you'll only be able to watch what happens at your doorstep live.
- **Consider the tech capabilities.** Some video doorbells use AI to distinguish between people, animals, vehicles, and even packages. This is a useful feature if you don't want to receive an alert every time a car drives down your busy street or a stray cat walks across your porch. Some video doorbells allow you to limit the area they send you alerts for as well, meaning you can remove the

busy street from your camera's alert range altogether. Decide whether these features are important to you before you buy a doorbell camera.

- **Think about video quality.** When buying a video doorbell, think about the factors that can affect a camera's video quality, such as resolution of the camera, HDR capabilities, field of view, whether or not you can zoom in on recorded videos, and how well the camera performs at night. Consider your personal needs and preferences and choose a camera quality that will do a good job covering the areas you need surveilled at the right times.
- **Ask yourself if you need audio.** Many video doorbells, but not all, give you the ability to talk to and hear the person at your doorstep, even if you aren't home. If this feature is important to you, make sure the video doorbell you are considering offers it.
- **Understand smart platform integrations.** Many video doorbells are compatible with other smart platforms, such as Alexa or Google Assistant. If you want to use your video doorbell in conjunction with your smart assistant, make sure they are compatible. On a related note, if you plan on installing additional security cameras around your home besides just a video doorbell, it's a good idea to purchase them together. That way you'll only need to pay for a single subscription service to save all video recordings to the cloud.
- **Protect your video doorbell from hackers.** Video doorbell accounts have sometimes fallen victim to hackers. Keep your doorbell safe by using a unique user ID along with a strong password. Don't use the same user ID and password for multiple accounts or a single data breach could expose several of your accounts all at once. In addition, take advantage of two-step verification to add an extra layer of protection to your account. Other measures you can take are keeping your camera software and antivirus up to date. Finally, don't share doorbell videos on social media and never share your login information with anyone. If you want a second person on the account, add a shared user instead.
- **Avoid tech support scams.** If you need tech support, always make sure you call the official tech support number or visit the official doorbell camera website. Scammers often use ads to make fake customer support numbers or websites appear high up on a search engine's results. If you get in touch with a fake service, they may ask you for your login credentials or other sensitive information to "confirm your identity." Worse yet, they may ask for payment in return for their assistance. Always double-check the URL of the website you are visiting and confirm tech support numbers on the company's official website.

## **For More Information**

Read more about tech support scams. Check out BBB's tips on purchasing a home security system. To report a scam, visit BBB Scam Tracker. Your report can help other consumers recognize a scam before it's too late.

Always do business with companies that comply with BBB Accreditation Standards and the BBB Standards for Trust.

Check out our ConsumerHQ and the BBB news feed for more tips and scam alerts.

For more information or further inquiries, contact the Wisconsin BBB at [www.bbb.org/wisconsin](http://www.bbb.org/wisconsin), 414-847-6000 or 1-800-273-1002. Consumers also can find more information about how to protect themselves from scams by following the Wisconsin BBB on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.