

At home, intrusion alarms are the most popular product, but the huge increase in violent assaults on residences is also creating demand for security bars and products that allow visitors to be screened before entry.

For automobiles, anti-theft alarms, steering-wheel locking devices, and systems that disable the vehicle during an attempted theft are very popular. Anti-theft devices for auto accessories are also in demand. It is not uncommon for expensive equipment such as car CD players to be stolen again, as soon as they are replaced. Tempered glass is seen as the principal protection against violent attacks on automobiles. Affluent Mexicans go further. According to industry experts, more than 800 cars were armoured in 1995 alone.

Personal protection is a more complex matter, because not all of the methods in use are legal. Firearms are, in theory, stringently controlled by the government. Nonetheless, a leading newspaper recently estimated that one in five Mexicans owns an unregistered gun. Mace® is another example. Pepper spray is legal because it is made of natural products which are not controlled by the police or army. In theory, sales of Mace® and similar products are controlled by the police, but these products are readily available, because some people prefer them to pepper spray. Electric shock weapons, such as the Air Taser® are not specifically prohibited, and company promotional literature claims that they can be used without a permit.

The recently published national safety plan calls for a revamping of legislation to allow citizens to more freely protect themselves. Suppliers of personal security products take this to mean new legislation permitting the sale of previously restricted products. It is unlikely that the new laws will affect restrictions on firearms.

For most personal security products, the consumer is looking for reliability before affordability. Demand is expected to diminish in the medium term as Mexicans become more used to daily crime, and as government measures to reduce the crime rate have their intended effect.