



DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND WEIGHTS & MEASURES

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I would like to take this time to urge you to be aware of the unwanted scam artists that knock on your door, offer to fix your roof or chimney or patch your driveway. They give you an excellent price, ask for a small deposit and promise to come back at a later date with all the materials they need to finish the job. Of course, they never return and you have no way of contacting them. You are out of the money. Here are a few tips to better prepare you in dealing with people that may, or may not, be looking to take advantage:

- If someone knocks on your door and you are not expecting anyone, simply do not answer the door. If you feel like you must answer the door, tell them that you are not interested and a friend does all your home improvements.
- If possible, go to your window and try and see what kind of vehicle they are driving. If you can, write down a license plate number. Then, call your local police department. The police want to know about these solicitors and the information you share with the police may very well help to stop them from taking advantage of others.
- Do not, under any circumstance, let them into your house. If you can, before you answer the door, call a neighbor or a relative. This way you are on the phone with someone when answering the door and the solicitor will be more inclined to leave upon your request.
- If you are outside when they come to your home, tell them you are not interested in having any work done, ask them to leave and head into the house. Once inside, call someone right away, the police if need be, and tell them that you were just approached by an unwanted solicitor looking to do work on your house.

Being safe and being aware is being empowered. When working outside, you should always keep a phone with you, whether it is a cordless phone or a cellular phone, you should have a phone on your belt or in your pocket. In the event something should happen to you, you have a phone at your fingertips. If you are approached by an unwanted solicitor you have a phone in which you can call the proper authorities. There are many good, hardworking people that need work and will do a good job for a fair price. If you do need work done in and around your house, use a contractor that you know, or is recommended by a trusted friend or family member or use someone in the local yellow pages.

And remember; get as much information from them prior to giving them any money. Knowledge is power and the more information you have the stronger you will be. For example, contracts should have a start and end date. They should ask for a third of the amount due up front, a third at the half-way point, and a third when the work is complete. The contract should include for every day past the end date the total bill will be reduced by \$300 per day past that end date. And remember, never pay with cash.

If something does occur, contact your local police department right away. Also, contact the office of Consumer Affairs and Weights & Measures at 845-360-6700. We will do all we can to assist you.

Thank you, Commissioner Mitchell