DON’T GET SCAMMED!

Scams regarding home repairs and landscaping services are always something to be concerned about, especially since consumers are working on home improvement projects. Follow the safety tips below to reduce your chances of becoming a victim.

BE ON ALERT IF, AND WHEN...

- Unsolicited door-to-door salespeople offer to do home repair work for substantially less than market price.
- A contractor comes to your door unsolicited and offers reduced prices because they’ve just completed work nearby and have materials left over.
- A contractor asks you to pay for the entire job up front.
- A company, listing only a telephone or post-office box number, solicits for repair work.
- A contractor refuses to provide proof of insurance and references when requested.

TIPS TO AVOID BECOMING A VICTIM...

- Work with a licensed contractor. The best way to select one is to seek personal recommendations through friends, neighbors or relatives. Verify the contractor is properly licensed, and do your research if there are unresolved consumer complaints on file with the Better Business Bureau.
- Get written estimates from at least three firms. Ask for explanations for price variations. Don’t automatically choose the lowest bidder.
- Don’t fall for high-pressure sales tactics or prices that seem “too good to be true.”
- On any home improvement job, you should expect to make a down payment, but try to limit it to no more than 30% of the total price. Pay only by check or credit card, not cash.
- All agreements should be in writing and as specific as possible.
- Do not sign a contract that has blank spaces, or is one that you do not understand.
- Find out whether the contractor guarantees his or her work and products.
- Don’t make final payment until the work is 100% complete and you are satisfied.
- Call the police if they begin “working” without your consent.
- Call the police if you have questions, or if unfamiliar people or companies appear at your door or in your neighborhood.

REPORT ALL SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY TO THE POLICE

Emergency: 911 - Non-Emergency: 703-792-6500