



NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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Police encourage residents to protect themselves from scams

The Howard County Police Department encourages residents to protect themselves and their homes from scam artists.

Reports of scams and deception burglaries typically increase during spring and summer months. Residents should use the following tips to avoid being victimized, and share this information with family, friends, and neighbors, especially senior citizens, who are sometimes targeted for scams.

Commons types of scams include:

- Driveway paving and resealing
- Tree trimming and removal
- Utility service for gas or water problems
- Roof repairs or inspection

If someone seems eager to look inside your home, or seems to be trying to distract you, close and lock the door and call 911. Non-emergency solicitor complaints should be directed to 410-313-2200.

If you need work done in your home, follow these tips:

- Request references from prospective contractors
- Be suspicious of unsolicited offers and services
- Don't feel pressured to make a decision on the spot
- Ask to see contractors' required license
- Always obtain a written contract for the work
- Don't share personal or financial information with prospective contractors
- Verify the phone number and physical location of the business before agreeing to any work
- Jot down the license plate of the company vehicle, just in case

While some reputable companies do offer their services door-to-door, they are required to possess a Howard County peddler and solicitor card. Residents should request to see this ID in addition to a company ID.

To report an unregistered sales person, or get more information about shopping for home improvement services, contact the Howard County Office of Consumer Protection by phone at 410-313-6420, by e-mail at consumer@howardcountymd.gov or online at www.howardcountymd.gov/consumertips.

Homeowners can check to see if a contractor is licensed through the Maryland Department of License and Regulation using their Licensing Queries function at <http://www.dllr.state.md.us/pq/>.

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