

Rogue Traders

Most of us have answered our front door to someone trying to sell something to us. They tell us

- "This cut-price special offer is only available if you sign today,
- there isn't many left of these and if we turn it down or wait, we will lose out.....
- 'Congratulations! You've won a prize! If you could just sign here for it'
- 'I noticed you've got a few loose tiles on your roof
- 'There have been a lot of burglaries in this area recently ...
- " I'm doing a survey ...'

Most callers are smartly dressed or look official and can be very friendly and chatty. What they are trying to do is get you involved in conversation to convince you that you need what they are selling but ask yourself, before they knocked, did you know you needed new windows, house alarm, drive re-laid, membership to a monthly book club, mobility scooter, a time share apartment in Corfu, damp proofing and the list goes on. If you did want anything like this, you would have picked up the yellow pages, looked on the internet or local paper and invited the relevant companies to call on you when you ask them to.

Unscrupulous doorstep traders....

- Often prey on elderly or vulnerable consumers.
- Use pressure selling tactics to persuade people into buying goods or services.
- Don't tell people about their right to cancel if they change their mind after signing a contract.
- Even offer to drive you to the bank to withdraw your money.

Points to remember

- Don't believe all callers are genuine.
- Don't believe the 'scare stories' a salesman may tell you – they are rarely true.
- Don't believe genuine tarmac companies have loads over – they don't!
- Don't sign anything or pay for anything until you are sure about it.
- Don't believe special deals, 'today only' – it's high pressure selling.
- Don't allow them into your home, even if they "need to check". Never allow strangers to have access to your property unless you have asked them to call for a specific reason.
- Do check the identity of the caller by asking to see an ID card.
- Do challenge anyone looking over your property – did you give permission?
- Do consider if you really need the work done.
- Think before you decide.
- Shop around for the best deal.
- Do ask the caller to leave you with information to study at your leisure.
- Do remember you often have a short time to cancel a contract after cold call.

Always remember it's your house, your money and your decision. No matter how nice they seem or how insistent they are, you can say no and shut the door on them. If you are unsure about the "fault" they have seen, ask family or friends to check for you later.