

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Doorstep Sellers

Have the
Confidence to
Say No



Working in
Partnership



Community
Legal Service



At some time during the year each of us have received a 'knock at the door' only to open it and find someone wishing to read a meter, or sell us some goods or offer a service.



Thankfully the majority of callers are genuine, but on rare occasions you may be approached by a bogus caller or a rogue trader.

Bogus callers are con men (or women) who use a variety of stories to gain access to your home in order to steal.



They often disguise themselves by dressing smartly and claiming to be from the council, health authority, police, gas, water or the electricity company.

Energywatch, the independent gas and electricity consumer council, offer a free Priority Service Register for people who are over 60, disabled, chronically sick, visually or hearing impaired.

Amongst other benefits, Energywatch offer a 'password' scheme. Your gas and electricity company will give you a personal password to use every time they visit your home.



Other bogus callers include those that pretend to be in the building trade, offer to repair roofs and guttering, carry out tree felling, tarmac driveways and the like. You should even be wary of sales people offering bargains such as free prizes, holidays or cash awards.

Bogus callers can be convincing and persuasive and may occasionally use children under the pretext they need to retrieve a ball from the garden.

What Should You Do?

If you are in any doubt, **keep them out!**

The most important thing to remember when answering the door to callers you do not know is **not** to let them in until you are sure they are genuine.

Genuine callers won't mind coming back later so that you can arrange for a friend or relative to be present when they return.

If you do let a caller in to your home, but you believe their behaviour to be suspicious, you should ask them to leave. Call a neighbour or even phone the police – although you may have to wait and do this once the caller has left – never put yourself at risk.

Don't keep all your cash in the house as this is one reason why bogus callers target older people.

Never leave your handbag or wallet unattended and stay with the caller, keeping doors to all other rooms closed.

Bogus callers are likely to check dressing tables, wardrobes, or sideboards, so never keep high value belongings or cash there.



Remember, genuine callers won't mind sensible precautions. It is your home – you should not feel pressurised or bullied.

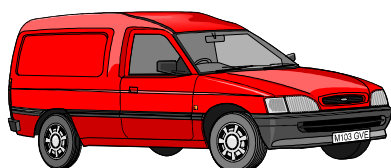
Top Tips for Dealing with Callers

STOP, CHAIN, CHECK

- **Stop** & think before opening the door. Are you expecting anyone?
- Put the door **chain** or bar on. Use a door mirror to get a better look at the caller.
- **Check** to see who it is by using door viewers or looking through a window.
- If you do not know the caller, ask who they are, what they want and to post their identity card through the letter box.
- Make checks with the company or organisation by telephoning to confirm their identity.
- If you are in any doubt – **just say no.**

Dealing with Traders

- 1) Ask yourself if you really want the item? Think whether or not it is something you would have gone out to buy had the person not knocked at the door. Can you afford it?
- 2) Whilst some traders who cold call may carry out the work, you may be charged extremely high rates. Trading Standards have known claims for £1000s for very shoddy workmanship. **Very often what seems too good to be true – is.** Ask friends or neighbours if they can recommend a trader.
- 3) Make sure you get the name, address and telephone/contact number of the person you are dealing with – you may need to get hold of them at a later date
- 4) Get everything in writing from the company, including any promises or guarantees they make either about their service or the product they are selling.
- 5) Read all the documentation carefully. If you are in any doubt at all, ask to have the paperwork looked over by a friend, colleague or someone at the Citizens Advice Bureau or Trading Standards Service. Reputable companies will not mind, nor pressure you into signing.
- 6) Don't part with any money unless you know what you're getting in return. Never agree to anyone carrying out work they say you need until you get a second opinion.
- 7) Never sign a blank form – for any reason – it may cost you a fortune in the long run.
- 8) Never let anyone drive you to the bank/building society or post office to withdraw money from your savings.
- 9) Remember – if you did not request the trader to call and the value of the goods you are buying is over £35, you will have a seven-day period in which you can change your mind.



There are many organisations willing to offer help, support and assistance, so why not note their details down in the back of this booklet and keep them handy beside the phone.

In most areas, Help the Aged run HandyVan and Senior Safety projects, which are freely available to many older people.

HandyVan fitters will install essential security devices like door chains and window locks whilst SeniorLink provides an immediate response service which enables you to contact someone instantly for help, 24 hours a day. **For the HandyVan Service ring 01255 473 999**

Age Concern 0800 00 9966

Delivers a variety of practical services for older people and their families.

Help the Aged 0808 800 6565

Offers a range of practical solutions to support older people's independence.

Citizens Advice Bureau

Offers free, confidential, impartial and independent advice including debt and consumer issues, benefits and housing.

Crimestoppers 0800 555 111

Ring anonymously if you have any information relating to any crime, anywhere in the UK.

Neighbourhood Watch

Acts on crime reduction information and works with the Police and other partners to build safer communities.

Trading Standards 08457 585497

Can give free legal advice on your rights against doorstep sellers and will take details of complaints.

Police 01622 690690

Work with local communities to target resources and disrupt criminal behaviour.

CROP 01622 812228 Citizens' Rights for Older People - offering free advocacy services

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Energywatch 08459 060708

Password

Doctors

Gas

Account No:

Electricity

Account No:

Telephone

Account No:

Water

Account No:

If you would like more information on:

	REF
<input type="checkbox"/> BUYING GOODS	FS1
<input type="checkbox"/> BUYING SERVICES	FS2
<input type="checkbox"/> COMPETITIONS & PRIZE DRAWS	FS11
<input type="checkbox"/> BEATING COWBOY TRADESMEN	FS15
<input type="checkbox"/> BARGAIN BUYS	FS25
<input type="checkbox"/> BUYING SECONDHAND	FS26

Then please contact the Trading Standards Fact Sheet Line on
01233 652280 and quote the relevant reference number
or download from www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/kent

