

May 2015

Fraud Alert!

Spring Time Frauds

This is the time when consumers are anxious to begin cleaning up their yards. This is also the time when “gypsy” contractors can be seen going door to door trying to drum up business. The problem is that a good majority of these contractors that go door to door are not legitimate, registered contractors. They are not contractors whose business have a physical address and the phone numbers they give are only cell phone numbers; not a land line. Each year we see a spike in complaints from consumers who have paid for work and either the business did not come back to finish the work or they find out the work was subpar, and that’s when they realize they have no way to reach the business. Please beware of this type of contractor. If you want to have work done please find a reputable company by doing the following; Make sure they have a license to work in Pennsylvania, ask the business for their Home Improvement Contractor number or (HIC#), Make sure you ask them what their physical address and phone number are for the business, ask for a written estimate and make sure the estimate or contract has a detailed description of the work to be performed, the materials to be used, and a start date and a completion date. Also, if any warranty is offered, that should also be in writing. Remember, any contract that is signed in your home gives you a 3-day right to cancel notice which should be attached to the contract. There may be a one-third deposit up front requested, but there is no reason to pay in full until the work is completed to your satisfaction. Once the bill is paid in full there is no incentive left for that business to come back and complete the work.

Information from: Bucks County Consumer Protection 1-800-942-2669.

Consumers can also access the BCCP brochure on the Home Improvement Contractors Act by going to www.buckscounty.org and click on Consumer Protection, and then click on consumer tips. While at our website you can also find out if a business is registered to work in Pennsylvania. Just click on Consumer Links, and then click on www.attorneygeneral.gov - Pa Attorney General Website. Once there, click on “Home Improvement Consumer Information”

Monthly Fraud Alerts brought to you by:

BUCKS COUNTY CRIMES AGAINST OLDER ADULTS TASK FORCE

Bucks County District Attorney’s Office
215-348-6344
Bucks County Area Agency on Aging
215-348-0510
Bucks County Coroner’s Office
215-348-3852
Network of Victim Assistance (NOVA)
1-800-675-6900

A Woman’s Place (AWP)
1-800-220-8116
Bucks County Office of Consumer Protection
215-348-6060
Bucks County Register of Wills
215-348-6265
US Dept. of Health and Human Services/OIG
1-800-447-8477

www.crimesagainstolderadultsbucks.org

24 - HOUR HOTLINE: 1-800-490-8505