Guard Against Traveling “Contractor” Scams

Unfortunately, scam artists often target homeowners, particularly the elderly, which can lead to property damage and/or financial loss.

Traveling “contractors” pose as door-to-door home repair contractors and defraud homeowners with painting, roofing, fencing, landscaping, and paving scams. Not every door-to-door solicitor operates this way, however to protect yourself from those that do become familiar with their common tactics.

The Suspects

- Often solicit door-to-door
- Come across as friendly, but use high-pressure or scare tactics
- Are reluctant to give a price upfront or provide a written contract, and increase the price after the project is started or completed
- Demand payments in cash or immediately cash checks (sometimes changing the amount)
- Use toll-free telephone numbers instead of local numbers
- Use P.O. boxes instead of actual street addresses
- Target the vulnerable, especially the elderly and immigrants
- Offer complimentary inspections and then offer to fix “problems”
- Are usually unlicensed and uninsured, putting you at risk if they get hurt on your property

The Scams

- Claim they have leftover material from another job at a reduced price
- Claim they have done work for your neighbor
- Claim they will use a “sealant,” but actually apply a useless, water liquid that they spray on roofs, fences, driveways
- Push new wood shakes under old ones and apply useless oil to “repair” a roof
- Charge “by the can” for painting and then exaggerate the amount used

To Avoid Being Scammed

- Do your research before hiring someone who solicits for jobs at your front door
- Check to see if the contractor is licensed using the “Instant License Check” feature at www.cslb.ca.gov or call 800-321-CSLB (2752)
- Be suspicious if the person wants to start work immediately and will not provide a written contract
• Be aware that a contractor must notify you that you have three business days to cancel a signed contract.

Report any suspicious home improvement activity in your neighborhood to CSLB or local law enforcement.

To report suspicious activity to CSLB, complete a lead referral form at www.cslb.ca.gov/LeadForm or call:

CSLB Northern California:  (916) 255-2924
CSLB Central California:  (559) 490-0580
CSLB Southern California:  (562) 345-7600