

# DOOR-TO-DOOR SCAMS



## TYPE OF SCAM

Door-to-door scams are a frequently occurring scam in which individuals come to your door offering to do some home repair or yard work such as tree trimming, sealcoating, or roofwork. If the scammer does any work, it is often substandard and they will charge you an outrageous price. Never allow these individuals into your home or on your property.

## DESCRIPTION OF SCAM

These scammers tend to target homes typically owned by senior citizens. However, anyone can be a target of these scammers. Homes are targeted by the following characteristics: style of drapes, lesser maintained lawns, single garbage cans, and four-door sedans. Listed below is a synopsis of some of the more common door-to-door scams.

### THE HOME REPAIR SCAM

These types of scammers have a habit of scanning residential neighborhoods in hopes of finding a person outside his or her home. Once located, the suspect(s) approach the person and recommend urgent home repair work. One such scam common in this region is the *Tree Trimming Scam*. The suspects use a range of pricing depending on the responses of the victim. The price is often negotiated and the performed work is usually substandard in nature. It is not uncommon for the suspects to return to the home and continue requesting additional payments. If the opportunity arises, the suspects may commit a residential burglary at the home by distracting the homeowner while the others enter through another door or while they are searching for further problems.

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## THE SEALCOAT SCAM

These scammers will drive around residential areas trying to sell a quick sealcoating job to residents who are outside the home. They may indicate they have leftover sealer from their last job and would rather use it than waste it. These individuals insist on doing the job that day or have their victims make a down payment for future service (which does not occur). The price on the sealcoat scam tends to range from low to high. These scammers tend to use a sticky oil based sealer or dilute the product with kerosene, gasoline, or other petroleum distillates. The sealcoat tends to become flaky or uneven after several days. The sealcoat does not last very long.

## THE RUSE ENTRY (BURGLARY)

In instances of ruse entries, the scammers offer false identification such as a utility worker, city employee, or a contractor and may dress and act the part. The suspect(s) enter the home using the ruse of "checking something" such as water pressure, pipes, gas lines, and fuses. While one scammer keeps the victim distracted inside or outside the house, another accomplice makes entry into the home and commits a burglary.

## HOW TO RESPOND

Never let anyone in your home. If they need assistance, tell them to wait outside as you call the police to assist them. If they say they are with a utility company, call the utility company to verify the work (do not use the number the worker gives you). Verify a number using the internet or phone book.

If you are approached while you are outside, do not let anyone on to your property to look around. This will give the suspects an opportunity to look for open doors and windows and then distract you. These individuals tend to keep the conversation going to distract you or to convince you to buy their service. These scammers will press a sense of urgency; and may end the conversation quickly. Write down the license plate number, vehicle and suspect description and note the direction of travel, and call the police.

## WHAT DO THE SCAMMERS WANT?

**\$\$\$MONEY\$\$\$!**

And they will stop at nothing to get as much of your money as possible.

## FACTS TO REMEMBER

When dealing with people who are involved with these scams, it is important to know how to recognize the potential warning signs. Here is a list of indicators suggesting you may be facing one of these scammers:

- No company name on truck or it has a small inexpensive sign, possibly a magnet sign (the name and number on the sign will be false)
- Out of state license plates
- No written price quote for work to be performed
- Cash only or advanced down payments with check or cash
- No business cards
- Cheap looking flyer or brochure
- Knocking on doors to get business (solicitors are required to have a solicitor's license, ASK TO SEE IT!)
- State this is a one day special, or they are only in the area for a limited time - wants to start work immediately
- Check website [www.dpor.virginia.gov](http://www.dpor.virginia.gov) to check for VA contractor licenses and complaints

***One of the best ways to stop crime is to prevent it from occurring. When in doubt, call the Police to check out the circumstances.***



**For further Information  
or to Report an Incident  
Contact**



**Fairfax County Police Department at  
703-691-2131 or 911**