

Consumer Alert

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Cynthia Sich, Director
Office of Consumer Affairs
330-643-2470 or 330-643-2879

County of Summit Office of Consumer Affairs Reminds Consumers to Prepare for Door-to-Door Solicitations

Springtime brings the return of flowers, birds and yes, door-to-door salespeople. So dust off your "no solicitors" signs or learn what to ask before you make that purchase or donation.

A few weeks ago, a City of Green resident reported being solicited at home by a door-to-door salesperson offering meat products. Often with meat or poultry sales, there are many factors that consumers want to take into consideration before buying. For example, know that "restaurant quality" does not mean that the meat is USDA Prime or USDA Choice (which are the higher grades for the quality given by the federal government). Meat is inspected at the packing plant for wholesomeness by the USDA and may be used by some restaurants, but this is not a promise of quality. Also, be careful if the price is "per serving" because many times the actual price per pound may be much higher than the price you would paid at your local supermarket. NEVER buy meat or poultry from an unrefrigerated vehicle.

Door-to-door sales offer the convenience of shopping without ever leaving your home, and the Office of Consumer Affairs would like to remind consumers to do a little homework before making a donation or buying any product from a door-to-door solicitation.

Tips When Answering Your Door

- Talking through a locked screen door for safety; ask to see the seller's solicitor's license or permit.
- Consider asking the salesperson to leave literature describing the product or donation being solicited and you can call them to return at a later time to finish the sale. This will give you a chance to do some comparison shopping via Internet, telephone or in-person.
- Before signing or giving away your money, read the contract you are about to sign, especially if it is asking for automatic monthly withdrawals from your bank account or to pay over time.
- Get a written copy of the contract. Make sure it includes all the company's information such as name, address, telephone number, website and name of the salesperson. Plus, a list of what item(s) you paid for, the amount and if there is a return or refund policy.
- If you purchase goods or services for \$25.00 or more, you have the right to cancel within 3-days under Ohio's Home Solicitation Sales Act. The law requires that you are given the notice of cancellation in writing. To cancel a purchase usually requires you to write the company.

Be extreme careful of those solicitors who offer to do repairs on your property for a cheap price because they have product (asphalt or roofing materials) left over from another job. These individuals have a history of doing shoddy work and are not located in the area or even the state, so if you need to file a complaint about the product or service, it is difficult or sometimes impossible to locate the company or individuals.

To file a complaint or find out more on this or other consumer issues, please contact the Office of Consumer Affairs at 330-643-2879, or visit our website at www.co.summit.oh.us/conaffairs.htm.