

DOORSTEP CRIME

Not sure? Don't open the door!

- Keep your front and back doors locked, even when you are at home.
- Install a 'spy hole' or electronic viewer in the front door so that you can see who the caller is before opening the door.
- Use a door chain or door bar so that you don't have to open the door fully to talk to the person on your doorstep.
- Even if the person calling has an appointment, check their identity card carefully.
- If the caller claims to be from a particular company, you can check by calling the company in question using a number from the phone book. Don't use a card or number given to you by the caller. Close and lock the door while you check. A genuine caller won't mind waiting.
- Don't leave any doorstep callers alone with your door open.

Never agree to have work done by someone just passing by. If you think work needs to be done, get at least two quotations from reputable companies. Never sign anything on the spot - but if you have, remember you have a 7 day cooling-off period during which you can cancel and receive a full refund.

- Always shop around for the best price.
- Be wary of 'special offers' or warnings about your home.
- Never hand over cash or sign anything.
- Talk to someone you trust, such as a relative, friend or neighbour, for a second opinion.

Bogus callers may be smartly dressed and claim to be from the council, police or utility companies. They can also turn up as builders or gardeners and try to trick you into paying for unnecessary work.

Here are some responses you can use to callers at the door:

- "I do not buy goods or services at the door."
- "I'd like more time to think about it."
- "I want to shop around and get other quotes."
- "I'd like to discuss it with someone else."

You can download a notice to deter cold callers here:

www.ourwatch.org.uk/resource_centre/document_library/cold_caller_warning_sticker

If you think a bogus caller has called on you, report it to the police immediately on 101 and to Trading Standards via the consumer helpline numbers below.

For advice on doorstep selling you can call the **Citizens Advice consumer helpline** on 08454 04 05 06 or visit www.adviceguide.org.uk