



Community Alert:

Home Improvement Scams

As the weather begins to improve, many will think about outside home, yard, and driveway improvements. Adding a room, renovating a basement, or doing some much-needed repairs around your home can be a big undertaking. Finding a trustworthy contractor is an important first step. Scammers will promise to do the work, but leave you and your home worse off than when you started. They may do shoddy work, damage your home, overcharge you, or just take your money without performing any services. So how do you tell the difference between a trustworthy contractor and a scammer? Before you hire a contractor, learn how to recognize the signs of a home improvement scam.

Signs of a Home Improvement Scam

- Scammers going door-to-door looking for business because they are “in the area”
- Scammers say they have leftover materials from a previous job
- Scammers pressure you for an immediate decision
- Scammers ask for payment up front or only in cash

How to Avoid a Home Improvement Scam

- Consider contractors who are licensed and insured
- Get multiple estimates
- Check online reviews carefully
- Get contractor recommendations from people you know and trust
- Check with the local home builders association and consumer protection agencies
- Request contract for services and read it carefully
- Establish a payment schedule in your contract where you don't pay the full amount for the project up front or until the work is complete
- Resist the pressure to act quickly. A scammer wants you to act quickly so you have less time to think and realize you are being scammed.

If you see someone selling something door-to-door, you can always call the North Reading Police Department at 978-664-3131 ext. 0 to check if the solicitor has registered with the police department as required by town by-laws.
Report concerns to the police department as soon as possible.

For more information: Visit consumer.ftc.gov/homes