



CONSUMER ALERT

Office of Consumer Affairs

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Seniors

Be on the Alert for Door-to-Door Roofing Contractors

The Office of Consumer Affairs has received several calls from senior homeowners and family members of seniors explaining that they are receiving unexpected visits by home improvement contractors who claim that their home's roof has been damaged by hail. The owners were then convinced that replacement needed to be done and signed contracts which did not include important details such as the price or materials. The salesmen even offered to help negotiate with the homeowner's insurance company. After the consumers had time to think about the solicitation, they called the office to check on the companies and ask about the incomplete contracts.

"Consumers should never sign a contract that is not completely filled out especially if the cost of the job is left blank as in these cases," said Cynthia Sich, Director of the Office of Consumer Affairs. "Homeowners need to be extremely careful when dealing with high-pressure sales that claim damage has been done and if repairs are not made immediately there could be more harm to the home. Do not rely on verbal statements when signing a contract; make sure to get all job duties and costs in writing. Or better yet, tell the salesperson to leave information with you about the job and this will allow you time to check them out and get additional estimates."

If you have storm damage, contact your insurance agent to see if the repairs are covered. Sometimes insurance companies can provide a list of contractors, but cannot steer you toward one in particular. Consumers should ask family, friends and neighbors for suggestions. It is recommended that you not allow your contractor to get involved with negotiations. In Ohio, a Public Insurance Adjustor's license is needed for a third party (other than an attorney) to represent a consumer in any insurance claim.

Homeowners need to be aware of storm chasers who show up after bad weather has passed offering to do repairs. Make sure to get three (3) written estimates before having any major home improvement or repair work performed and check the business out with the Office of Consumer Affairs. For more information on home improvement tips, click on the following link:

<http://www.co.summit.oh.us/ConsumerAffairs/pdfs/Home%20Improvement%20Tips.pdf>

Consumers who have a complaint against a business can contact the office at 330-643-2879 or visit www.co.summit.oh.us/conaffairs.htm to get a consumer complaint form or learn more about consumer help.