

# Doorstep Scams

## Close the Door

**on uninvited callers.** Don't feel obliged to answer the door to a cold caller - it is your home and you should not let anyone in unless you feel comfortable.

## Take Time

**to think before making a decision.** Rogue traders may try to pressure you by saying that they have special deals which are only available today. Don't let an uninvited trader start work straight away.

## Research

**Get at least 3 quotes from trusted companies** before having any work done in or around your property. Rogue traders go to great lengths to appear legitimate - check at least 3 review sites to make sure you are getting genuine feedback. Find traders who have been vetted by Trading Standards through a local approved trader scheme.

## Verify

**that the person is genuine and take a note of the company's details.** ID cards can be faked - close the door and, rather than phoning the number on the trader's ID card, look up the company's number on their official website or in an official phone directory to check their identity. Legitimate traders will be happy to wait while you perform these checks.

## Report

**any suspicious behaviour to Police Scotland on 101, or 999 in an emergency.** Sign up to the Neighbourhood Watch Scotland Alert system to receive timely alerts about local crime prevention and safety issues from partners such as Police Scotland.

## Common Doorstep Scams

The following tactics are commonly used by rogue traders who cold call consumers:

### Home Maintenance Work

They've noticed that you need urgent work done on your house.

They imply that if they don't carry out repairs immediately, lasting damage could be done to your property

### Gardening Work

They offer to carry out work in your garden or lay a tarmacadam driveway at a discounted rate because they have excess materials left over from another job which they need to use up.

They try to pressure you into agreeing to allow them to start work immediately.

### Services

They have a special deal or discount on gutter cleaning or pressure washing which is only available today.

They try to pressure you into making a decision there and then.

These scams are designed to pressurise you into making a decision on the spot. NEVER agree to allow an uninvited trader to start work on your property straight away - legitimate traders will be happy to return at a later date and will expect you to get quotes from other companies.

# Case Study

An elderly couple in Inverness were visited by a trader who said he had been carrying out roofing work for people in the next street. The trader's shirt and van had the company logo on them and he handed the couple a **leaflet with links to a website and online reviews**. He told them that he had noticed a small repair which needed fixed on their roof and warned that, if the work was not carried out **immediately**, the roof could collapse.

The couple were worried and agreed to allow him to carry out the work and to pay him by bank transfer. **No receipt, contract or cancellation rights were provided**. Once the trader had completed the repair, he told them that he had discovered **additional work** which needed to be carried out, at a cost of £4,000. Again, the couple felt **pressured** into agreeing to the work being done - the trader seemed friendly and knowledgeable, although they noticed that he avoided some more detailed questions about the work being carried out.

Once he had left, they noticed a leak upstairs. Their daughter found a roofing company which had been approved by the local council's Trading Standards department and asked them to visit her parents' house. After inspecting the roof, he told the couple that the original trader **had not carried out the repair work promised** and that there had been no danger to their roof in the first place.

The couple's daughter checked the trader's website and, after investigating the company, discovered that their **business address was false** and that they had been removed from the review sites they advertised in their leaflet.

The couple had paid the £4,000 by **bank transfer** and did not have a cancellation agreement, contract or receipt. They contacted **Advice Direct Scotland** to report the trader and he is now being investigated by local Trading Standards officers.



## Trusted Sources

### Approved Traders

Find local traders who have been vetted by Trading Standards  
[www.tsscot.co.uk/consumer-advice/approved-trader-schemes](http://www.tsscot.co.uk/consumer-advice/approved-trader-schemes)

### Police Scotland

Call 101 if you see someone suspicious in your local area or call 999 in an emergency

### Neighbourhood Watch Scotland

Sign up to receive localised safety alerts from partners such as Police Scotland  
[www.neighbourhoodwatchscotland.co.uk/sign-up-for-alerts](http://www.neighbourhoodwatchscotland.co.uk/sign-up-for-alerts)

### Advice Direct Scotland

Report all scams and get free consumer advice online or over the phone  
[www.consumeradvice.scot](http://www.consumeradvice.scot)  
0808 164 6000