



DenverDA

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NEWS RELEASE

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TRAVELING CON ARTISTS “SPRING” UP

Denver District Attorney Mitch Morrissey, with Jefferson County District Attorney Scott Storey and Colorado Attorney General John Suthers, warned people across Colorado today about the return of home repair scam criminals. Known as “travelers,” these con artists come to town as the weather warms and people begin to consider home repair projects.

Denver is investigating its first reported scam in which an 84-year-old woman first paid to have sidewalk cracks “repaired” but then went on to pay thousands of dollars to have her foundation “repaired” as well.

The only effective method of dealing with these types of scams is to prevent them; once they have a victim’s money, they are gone.

Denver DA Morrissey urged people to report encounters with suspected “travelers” and to call law enforcement right away if you or someone you know has become a victim. “Many people just think they made a foolish choice and don’t realize that what happened was a crime. These are criminal acts and reporting them will help us put these people out of business.”

The most important prevention tool is to simply never do business with anyone who comes to your door unsolicited. Additional prevention tips and scams to watch for are on the enclosed fact sheet.

Morrissey, Storey and Suthers also urged people to especially watch out for older neighbors who are often vulnerable and to report suspicious activity to your local law enforcement agency.

Denver DA’s Office Fraud Line: 720-913-9179
Jefferson County DA’s Office: 303-271-6980
AARP ElderWatch: 1-800-222-4444 (statewide)

FACT SHEET

Traveling Con Artists

- Traveling scam artists arrive every spring and prey on victims, especially the elderly, with door-to-door home repair, paving and other scams, intimidating the consumers into paying thousands of dollars for poor quality and unnecessary home repairs
- They often say they can give you a good deal because "they have materials left over" from a job nearby. They may claim to offer a "lifetime guarantee" -- but they don't even offer a contract
- The original low estimate is replaced by much higher charges
- Sometimes the con-artists are menacing or threatening, especially to older citizens
- The job turns out to be very poor or worthless
- The crooks are gone as soon as they cash your check with little hope of ever getting any money back

Types of Scams

- Roofing (they'll pretend to fix it, usually no repair is actually done)
- Sidewalk crack repair (they put worthless over cracks that usually don't need repair)
- Driveway repair (they'll put an oily substance, usually worthless, on asphalt driveways to appear as though it has been re-sealed)
- Car dent repair (they'll drive by and offer to fix dents but after you pay they're gone)
- Cable contractors or utility workers (they'll use this to gain access to homes and take wallets and purses)
- Home foundation repair (they'll pretend to fix cracks and leaks with worthless paint)
- Home siding or replacement windows (using worthless material for an unneeded job)

How to Recognize "Travelers"

- Typical scams involve roofing, paving, and other home repair work door-to-door
- They may drive newer pick-up trucks and may have out-of-state license plates
- They prey on the unsuspecting by using friendly, but high-pressure tactics
- They may say they have material left over from a previous job, or insist they did work for you before and need to "finish the job" or they did work for a neighbor
- They quote bargain prices, but demand much more after the job
- They do poor quality work -- or little or no work at all

Protect Yourself from Traveling Scam Artists:

- Don't do business with unsolicited, door-to-door "handymen"
- Deal with local contractors
- Get at least three bids on work, and don't necessarily choose the lowest bid
- Get references and call them
- Insist on a written contract and don't be pressured into paying more money
- Do not add on additional work projects after work has begun
- Don't be pressured into making decisions

What to Do:

- If you do spot traveling con-artists report them immediately to your local law enforcement agency
- Watch out for older neighbors who might be threatened or intimidated by traveling con-artists and contact the neighbor to let them know of your concern
- Let your neighbors know that these crooks are in the area
- If you have questions contact:
 - Denver District Attorney's Office fraud line: 720-913-9179
 - Denver Police Department: 720-913-2000
 - AARP ElderWatch: 1-800-222-4444
 - Or your local law enforcement agency