



**DenverDA**

Mitchell R. Morrissey, District Attorney - Second Judicial District  
1201 W. Colfax Avenue, Dept. 801, Denver, CO 80202

Bus. Phone: 720-913-9001  
Fax: 720-913-9035



**Mitch Morrissey**  
Denver District Attorney



## **I Hear You Knocking... But You Can't Come In**

Ahhh, Springtime in the Rockies. The flowers, the trees, the snow, the hail damage, the tree limbs in the yard. Are door-to-door folks knocking on your door offering to *"help you with clean up and save you money?"* Before you buy, read these tips.



## KEEP THESE TIPS IN MIND

As warmer weather arrives, so do door-to-door solicitations. Based on neighborhoods and home values, scammers can target people they believe have money.

Residents should be cautious anytime a stranger comes knocking unsolicited, especially if they are trying to sell you goods or services.

In Kentucky, consumers were warned about a phony door-to-door contractor scam where the con artists demanded money up front and promised to repair driveways damaged by winter. But the con artists left with the cash and didn't do the work.

Or this one: Con artists go door-to-door claiming that several robberies have been reported in the area. They claim they are a security company and offer a free security inspection. Of course, a person who is afraid of being robbed might be willing to get some "free" help with home security. Once in the door, the con artist figures out a way to steal money on the spot or case the home for a future robbery.

Another utility scam is even trickier. After a storm's power outage, scammers go door-to-door pretending to be from a utility company and will offer help to get your lights and power back on quicker—for a price, of course.

The Federal Trade Commission has warned that some consumers actually fall for this one because they are concerned about having the electricity or heat off for a few days. The scammer might make the charge seem relatively doable, only charging \$50 or \$100 up front to make sure the lights or heat gets back on quickly. The

door-to-door person could even look like a utility employee with a uniform or a badge. But no, it's a crafty disguise --**because no one from any utility company will go door-to-door asking for money.** It's a scam. If you pay, you'll wait anyway. Hours later: no lights, no cable. No heat or water. What's more, there's no sign of the person you thought might have been the ray of light in your dark hours.

Here are some tips for avoiding door-to-door scams:

Don't do business right on the spot. You can and should always get a second and even a third bid.

- Remember that a receipt is worth nothing unless the business is valid and reputable.
- Never pay for services in cash and be wary of paying up front for a product or service that will be delivered at a later date.
- Watch out for deals that offer steeply discounted prices that seem too good to be true.
- Listen for scare tactics, like the solicitor telling you he smells a gas leak coming from your home.
- Be sure you read and understand any agreements or contracts you sign.
- Don't be afraid to offend someone by not doing business with them.
- Never let someone into your home that you did not invite.
- If the salesperson can't provide a city or county license for door-to-door sales, it's best not to buy anything from them.



## Great Party! Errr, Wish I Hadn't Purchased.

Have you ever gone to an in-home sales party and felt pressured to buy something? Well, if you regret your purchase, [the FTC's Cooling-Off Rule](#) may be able to help. But time is of the essence.

The Rule gives you a 3-day right to cancel a sale made at someone's home or workplace, or at a seller's temporary location — like a hotel room, convention center, fairground or restaurant.

By law, the seller must tell you about your right to cancel at the time of sale, give you two copies of a cancellation form, and a copy of your contract or receipt. Your right to cancel for a full refund extends until midnight of the **third business day after the sale**. You don't have to give a reason for canceling your purchase. You have the right to change your mind.

There are exceptions, including sales that are:

- under \$25 for sales made at your home;
- under \$130 for sales made at temporary locations;
- real estate, insurance, or securities;
- vehicles sold at temporary locations, if the seller has at least one permanent place of business; and
- arts or crafts sold at fairs or places like shopping malls, civic centers, and schools.

If you cancel your purchase, the seller has 10 days to cancel and return any check you signed or refund all your money and tell you whether any product you still have will be picked up. Within 20 days, the seller must either pick up the items left with you, or reimburse you for mailing expenses.



**THINK YOU'VE BEEN SCAMMED?**  
**If you suspect you've been scammed or exploited, call our Fraud Hot Line to report it.**  
**720-913-9179**

### **SCHEDULE A SPEAKER**

**If you would like a Word document version of this newsletter, I'm happy to send along, just email with a request.**



Interested in learning more about scams happening in Denver? Do you want to know how to protect yourself from identity theft? Maro Casparian is available for speaking engagements with faith-based organizations, neighborhood associations, PTAs, schools, rotary clubs, etc.

Maro Casparian  
Director Consumer Protection 720-913-9036

Email [amc@denverda.org](mailto:amc@denverda.org) to: Subscribe to this newsletter, schedule a presentation or to send suggestions for the next newsletter.

