

National “Doorstep” Cold Calling Protocol

Everybody, and particularly the most vulnerable are at risk from bogus callers and doorstep rogue traders. These problems are well documented and well known to investigative agencies such as trading standards and the police.

Throughout the Country there are many excellent initiatives underway to educate householders, particularly the elderly to change their ways of doing things, for example:-

- don't keep unnecessary sums of money in the house
- use door chains
- not deal with unexpected 'door knockers'

Many callers do, from time to time need to make house calls for example meter readers, representatives from the utilities, local authority officers. One of the most important yet most difficult problem is knowing who to deal with and who not. The following protocol, developed in conjunction with the Leeds Distraction Burglary Group is being promoted by the Trading Standards Institute and in partnership with many of the major utilities. This protocol puts the onus on the caller to take the necessary steps (whether requested or not) to prove to the householder that they are who they say and to put the householder at ease.

National Doorstep Cold Calling Protocol

Where possible representatives will have previously notified appointments. On the occasions where this is not possible the following procedure will be observed :-

1. The representative will physically hand their identification card to the householder and declare their name and organisation. They will request that the householder compares their face with the photograph on the card and explain that they will not enter until the householder does so.
2. The representative will carry a larger identification card for examination by persons with sight difficulties. This card will bear print of at least size/font 14 and enlarged photograph.
3. The representative will explain the purpose of his/her visit.
4. The representative will explain that the householder can check their identification by telephoning their organisation and that they can arrange for attendance of a third party eg. neighbour if they wish.
5. The representative will make it clear that they will not enter the house unless the householder is happy for them to do so.
6. The representative will always be happy to return at a later pre-arranged date/time if the householder requests.

The organisation will provide a landline telephone number, preferably free phone, to facilitate employee bona-fide checks. This telephone number must be a direct line to a person/people and not utilise automated call management systems. Where possible this number should also be listed in the public telephone directory and other company advertising material.

Sponsored by The Leeds Distraction Burglary Unit and The Trading Standards Institute