



From mountain to sea

Trading Standards

Doorstep Crime, Scams & Safety

Bulletin No. 28

Doorstep Crime/ Cold Calling

Trading standards have had reports of cold calling in the Deeside area where a male is calling at residents' doors and claiming to be working with 'the Council' in getting underfloor insulation systems installed. Please note that Aberdeenshire Council do not have anyone working in the Deeside area in this capacity. Also, this cold caller has failed to leave any information about the type of work to be done or any contact information, as required by regulation (see article 1 in Bulletin 25). These points would both be red lights that the caller is actually a rogue trader, so should be treated with extreme caution. We would ask that descriptions are noted, details of any vehicles along with registration number, company details being displayed on the vehicle (if any) and that this information is passed to Trading Standards or Police Scotland.

Scams

One resident recently reported to us that they had received a text message purporting to be from NHS Scotland advising them that they had been in contact with someone with Covid-19. The text also contained an 'NHS' hyperlink which the resident was instructed to click on to order a Covid-19 test kit. It is suspected that this is in fact a phishing scam, designed to get the victim to input their personal details into a website which the link takes them to. In this case the resident, suspecting that it was a scam, did not click on the link.

These personal details are then sold to other criminals who will use them to perpetrate other e-crimes. In this case the text came from a number starting 078... whereas NHS texts should come from an 0800 number and normally advise you to self-isolate and book a PCR test at a test site.

If you receive such a text and you are unsure of its authenticity, please do not click on the hyperlink. Instead, call NHS Scotland on the National Assistance Helpline on 0800 111 4000. Further information can also be found at: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/test-and-protect/coronavirus-covid-19-contact-tracing>

Miscellaneous

Trading Standards continues to receive complaints from residents who are dissatisfied with roofing, gardening or landscaping work which had been agreed with traders (although in truth, this can happen in almost any line of work). Sometimes the work has been done to a standard the resident considers to be unacceptable. The Consumer Rights Act 2015 requires that any work done is done with reasonable care and skill and within a reasonable time frame.

In some circumstances where work has been done to an unacceptable standard, it may be possible for residents to resolve disputes through the Simple Procedure (previously known as the Small Claims Court). However, in the first instance and in line with the Act, the consumer should raise their dissatisfaction with the trader and allow the trader the opportunity to make amends. Where this has not happened, Simple Procedure may be followed.

Simple Procedure is a Court process which aims to be a fast and inexpensive way of settling these disputes without necessarily using a solicitor. Claims and paperwork are submitted online, the consumer and the trader present their perspectives and the matter is decided by a Sheriff. Some points to remember:

- Claims can be for up to a maximum sum of £5000
- Claims can be for the recovery of moveable property so long as there is also an alternative option of a cash claim, as above
- Claims can be to compel someone to do something specific so long as there is also an alternative option of a cash claim, as above
- Is the person you're claiming against able to pay the claim if it's upheld?
- If you're claiming against a company, has it ceased trading?
- Do you have the time to prepare your case for court if the claim is defended?
- If the Court decides in your favour but its decision is not complied with, can you afford the costs of having the decision enforced?

This is a very basic summary of Simple Procedure but if you find yourself in a position similar to that described above, Trading Standards or Citizens Advice Scotland may be able to assist you in negotiating the path through the process to a resolution. Further information can also be found at:

<https://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/taking-action/simple-procedure>

Please note that the advice given in these bulletins has been deliberately kept simple, so that if you are faced with a scenario such as the ones discussed here where fear, panic and alarm are often tools used deliberately by scammers, you



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will know what to do at that time. Remember, after the initial panic is over, you may have rights which Trading Standards can help you with.

If you have been the victim of a Doorstep Crime or an attempted crime, whether Bogus Caller or Rogue Trader, please report the matter to Consumer Advice Scotland so that Trading Standards can build a detailed, ongoing picture of the activities of these scammers throughout the Shire. This would be a great help to us to tackle this sort of crime.

Contact

For urgent Trading Standards matters, contact Aberdeenshire Council's Trading Standards at 01467 537222. For non-urgent enquiries, please contact Consumer Advice Scotland at <https://www.consumeradvice.scot/> or on 0808 164 6000.

Contact Police Scotland on 999 if you need urgent assistance or 101 for non-urgent matters.

For more information about scams please visit Friends Against Scams at <https://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/> or Take Five at <https://takefive-stopfraud.org.uk/>

Please direct any media queries to news@aberdeenshire.gov.uk or 01467 538222 during office hours.