



From mountain to sea

Trading Standards

Doorstep Crime, Scams & Safety

Bulletin 6

Doorstep Crime & Scams

- Further reports have been received of doorstep callers offering for sale potted topiary plants in the Peterhead area.
- A doorstep caller enquired and offered to purchase a caravan parked at a resident's home.

Residents should be cautious if engaging with doorstep callers and report any concerns to Trading Standards or Police Scotland. When reporting doorstep crime or concerns about doorstep callers, try to remember key details about the trader such as business names, addresses, names, age, accents, descriptions, vehicle type, registrations and signage. Keep all original paperwork, leaflets and brochures.

- A resident received a telephone call purporting to be from HMRC advising that unpaid taxes of £30k were due but would be reduced to £200 if paid using gift vouchers.
- A telephone call was received claiming to be from the recipient's internet provider, advising that the service would be withdrawn due to 'illegal behaviour'. The recipient was asked to call/ transfer to a specific number which would have resulted either in excessive calls charges, payment or a request for personal/ banking details which would eventually be used to defraud the recipient.

Residents should not share personal and banking information in this way and if they are unsure about the authenticity of the caller contact the government department or business direct, using the contact details they already have for them and not those or the instructions provided by an unsolicited caller.

- A resident has reported receiving a scam email advising that their TV License was due for renewal.

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- A report has also been received of a scam email purporting to be from British Gas demanding payment for a bill. The amount was small but the penalty for non-payment was disproportionately high. The email also threatened to visit the recipient's home to recover the amount due.

There are several signs that can indicate a scam email – an unusual or foreign senders address, impersonal greeting, poor spelling and grammar, incorrect or limited contact information, poor quality branding, attempts to look 'official', fake links, demand for payment and asking for bank/personal details. The emails are also designed to instill panic, prompting the recipient to take action or respond immediately before they have had time to think about it or contact their provider using genuine contact details.

- A letter advising of a substantial win on the Australian International FIFA World Cup Online Lottery was received by a resident. The letter instructed the recipient to contact a specific individual who would have advised that personal/bank details or a payment was required in order to award the winnings.

Residents are reminded that it is not possible to win a lottery they have not entered and payment of a fee is never required to obtain winnings. Personal and bank details should not be shared if requested under these circumstances.

Safety

- A report has been received of a misdescribed thermometer bought online. Thermometers are classed as 'medical devices' and must comply with construction, technical and safety requirements. Thermometers are currently 'sought after products' which means counterfeiters and scammers have been quick to flood the market with cheap non-compliant products in order to benefit financially at the detriment of consumers when they have been unable to purchase these products elsewhere.

Medical devices that are not manufactured to the required standards are likely to be inferior and incapable of delivering accurate readings.

Residents are encouraged to buy thermometers and other medical devices from reputable and trustworthy retailers and avoid those advertised on social media, marketplaces and websites offering cheaper options.



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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 164 600.

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/>

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