



SCAM ALERT!

A Consumer Update from
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Avoid Home Improvement Scams *"With Spring Comes Scams"*

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Home Improvement scams can happen when a person or company is paid up front for work they may have no intention of doing. They may offer false promises and disappear without doing any work or after doing only a partial or poor job.

To avoid these scams:

- Always obtain at least three estimates.
- Get any agreement on work to be done and the price in writing.
- Check references.
- Don't hire someone who is down on their luck or looking for side jobs when you do not know them personally.
- Do not pay cash up front. Never give more than 1/3 of the cost as your down payment.
- Never finance through the contractor without getting comparison loan rates.
- Do not let the contractor rush your decision. Be wary of "today only" prices.
- Check with the Better Business Bureau for comments or complaints about the contractor you are interested in.
- Beware of free home energy audits that come from companies other than your utility company.

Remember: Under Federal law, contractors who sell door-to-door are required to allow you to cancel within three business days prior to beginning any work.

The above ALERT is part of the Montgomery County Prosecuting Attorney's initiative to help citizens become aware of ways they can avoid becoming a victim, or ways they can help stop criminal activity that may be occurring. Upon request, the office can provide presentations on crime prevention actions and activities to halt crime and increase the quality of life in our community.

If you would like additional information on the above ALERT, or would like additional information regarding our programs to assist consumers in general and/or seniors in particular, please contact Kimberly Oliver, Supervising Attorney, Adult Protection Unit, or Ward Barrentine, Supervising Attorney, Fraud and Economic Crimes Unit at 937-225-5757.

If you would like us to send *SCAM ALERT* updates to you electronically, please send your e-mail address to: newsletter@mcpc.com to be added to our distribution list.