



SCAM ALERT!

September 2022



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Montgomery County Prosecutor

BEWARE OF CONTRACTOR FRAUD

Anyone who owns property inevitably will face maintenance costs. Whether you are trying to improve your property, or repair your property, you will have to negotiate with a contractor at some point. While most contractors are reputable, there are always some bad apples who are looking to make money without performing work. In your next negotiation, consider the following as red flags of potential fraud:

- Request for Large Amounts of Money Upfront: This usually comes in the form of the contractor stating that he/she will need a large proportion of the contract price upfront for cost of materials and equipment. Be aware that many States have limits on what a contractor can charge upfront. Ohio has provisions regarding Home Construction Service Suppliers. The provisions

pertain mainly to home construction with a contract price exceeding \$25,000. Under O.R.C. 4722.04, a home construction service supplier is prohibited from taking more than 10% of the total contract price prior to work beginning. While these provisions do not pertain to all types of home maintenance projects, they provide a good benchmark as to what a reasonable down payment should be in order to start work. Be leery of contractors that are requesting substantially more.

- **Lack of a Contract:** Your home is your palace. When it is damaged, or there is a desire to improve it, you want to make sure that the work is done properly. Beware of contractors who state that there is no need for a contract. While taking someone's word for it sounds like a nice thing to do, it is not the right thing to do when contracting for services. Lack of a contract can lead to additional monetary requests for "unforeseen problems." Make sure to include in the initial contract provisions for how unforeseen problems/work and additional costs will be handled.
- **Investigate Door to Door Contractors Prior to Hiring:** This is especially important following home damage from a natural disaster. People are in their most vulnerable state at these times. They want their houses fixed quickly. They want to trust humanity. Fraudsters are easily able to seize on these emotions. Do not hire any contractor the day of quote. Look into their credentials and only hire once you have determined that they are reputable.



IMPORTANT NUMBER IN THE EVENT YOU THINK YOUR ARE BEING SCAMMED:

- Montgomery County Prosecutor's Office: 937-225-5757

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 Anthony Schoen, Supervising Attorney, Fraud and Economic Crimes Unit at 937-225-5757.

Visit Our Website

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