

## **Beginning of DVD**

For many years Wiltshire council's Trading Standards has investigated incidents of rogue trading.

Rogue traders are those who call at homes with the intention to steal or cheat. Some offer to do work, others merely trick their way in to steal. They have no compassion and think of themselves as professionals. They target elderly and vulnerable people and take substantial amounts of money from them. By following the advice in this video we hope you will feel more confident to deal with door step traders and avoid becoming a victim.

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## **Voice Over**

Your help is important if we are to reduce this crime.

Wherever you live in the UK you can access help and advice by calling Consumer Direct who work on behalf of Trading Standards. By calling 08454 04 05 06 you will get advice to help you make the right decisions.

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**Arthur:**

Look at this,

I could use this business to cut down that overgrown tree in the garden.

**Alice:**

Mmmm...

“I was watching a Rogue Trader programme on the telly the other night they talked about people like this, they do work like tree pruning and household repairs.

You have to be careful though, because these people tell lies, they tell you will do it cheap and then it costs hundreds of pounds more. Sometime they even take people to the bank to get their money.

And not only that, but the work they do is poor and sometimes they cause damage.

The programme gave a number for Consumer Direct. Do you think we ought to give them a ring and see if they're ok these people.

**Arthur:**

“It seems a very good idea.

We always advise you deal only with businesses you know or that have been recommended. If you are unsure about a business, call Consumer Direct on 08454 04 05 06. They will help you make the right decision and may refer your call to your local trading standards.

As we saw in the previous clip, many rogue traders will try to make themselves look credible by paying for printed flyers or business cards. The tell tale signs are mobile phone numbers instead of landlines and no proper address. A flyer put through your door is no indication that the business is local or legitimate.

Don't be fooled if you do ring the number on their card to check the business out, the person answering the phone is probably their friend. And if you want to get in touch later to make a complaint they may deny having ever worked in the area.

They are chatty and want to gain your confidence, often saying that a neighbour sent them over to you or they are working up the road and noticed your guttering was leaking or a hedge needed pruning.

To get you into conversation, they use information they have gathered about you and the neighbourhood so that you think they are local. Much of this is available from telephone books, church or village notice boards, they even use bereavement notices. Take care not to give them personal information such as being widowed, living alone and neighbours' names as this can help them with their crimes.

Often they use a trick to persuade you that work needs doing. Some examples are putting a broken roof tile on your drive or pointing to moss on your roof saying it will

make your roof leak. Don't be taken in by stories of leaking water or gas pipes, delivery of special parcels, needing to switch off services or saying they have been sent by the council, these stories are always a scam.

Cold callers may mislead you about the eventual cost of the job, quoting cheaply and then charging much more.

Good trade's people don't go knocking on doors for work, only those who are poor workmen, or who are con-men operate like this. So please be suspicious of cold callers, and **never** let them into your home.

There are laws to protect you if you buy from anyone in your home. Some of the laws are complicated, but you will almost certainly have a legal right to change your mind within seven days, and it is an offence if the trader does not tell you this in writing.

We all know we need to be careful when opening our door to an unknown caller, here are some simple steps that you can take to avoid being the victim of a rogue trader or bogus caller. so:

- Always keep your doors locked even if you are inside the house.
- Never keep large sums of money in the house. Keep purses and wallets out of sight and not near the door.
- Check you have locked your back door before going to answer the front door. Many cold callers will have a partner who will go around the back to see if they can get into the house whilst they engage you in conversation at the front door.
- Put the security chain on the door before you open it. If you don't have a security chain, get one fitted.
- If someone is trying to sell you something BE FIRM. Tell them you never do business on the doorstep. IF they are persistent they can give you a really good quote, they are doing you a favour or the job really does need doing in a hurry, don't give in, be persistent too. Don't be bullied or charmed into something you don't really want. Remember, it is **your** right to shut **your** door.
- If you can see their car or van number plate from inside the house make a note of it.
- Ring Consumer Direct to report them. They may not be rogue traders but this sort of information can help to stop the real rogues.

Remember, if you have any suspicions, want advice or feel you may have already been the victim of a rogue trader, please call Consumer Direct on 08454 04 05 06 or call Wiltshire Police on 101.

Or if you feel threatened call 999.

All calls to Consumer Direct are kept confidential.

**And finally**

Did you know, that if someone is the victim of a rogue trader they are more likely to be targeted again, so please help us catch these despicable people who prey on the elderly and vulnerable, report them to Consumer Direct.