

Police warn public of paving fraud

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) would like to warn community members of a crime trend involving paving and construction fraud. With the warmer months approaching, residents inspecting their property from winter damage are reminded to be cognizant of repair deals.

Fraudsters are persistent, persuasive, and sometimes aggressive. Here's some considerations:

? Examination of these ?contractors? often reveals the absence of an official online presence, registration with local chambers of commerce, the Better Business Bureau, or similar reputable organizations.

? Fraudsters often contact individuals directly at their homes or via telephone, employing persuasive tactics to convince homeowners of the necessity for a contract or service they neither requested nor require. It is advisable to exercise caution when opening your door to unexpected visitors or solicitors offering items or services.

? Fraudsters employ professionally designed flyers and websites that have a legitimate appearance.

? Most contractors will know how much material they need for a job, so if they show up at your door saying they have ?leftover? from another job, be cautious.

? If there's no written contract with a quote written up front and the price changes mid-job due to ?unforeseen problems,? you're at their mercy.

? Fraudsters target vulnerable populations such as the elderly and request cash payments for ?today only? deals.

? It's a red flag when a payment is asked for up front before the job is completed.

If an offer seems too good to be true, chances are it is and it's someone trying to scam you out of your money.

For additional information on ongoing scams in Canada and to report fraud, contact the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre at 1-888-495-8501 or www.antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca.