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East Renfrewshire recommends giving a frosty reception to cold callers

Jan 27 2010 by [Lynda Nicol](#), [East Kilbride News](#)

RESIDENTS in East Renfrewshire are being urged to give cold callers looking to cash in on winter repairs a frosty reception.

For trading standards officers are asking residents to avoid the 'here today, gone tomorrow' rip-off merchants expected to target areas like this after the recent severe weather.

Paul Holland, East Renfrewshire Council's senior trading standards officer, explained: "Plumbers, decorators and roofers will be in short supply following the recent cold spell. But we would urge residents needing repairs to avoid the unknown workie who knocks your door offering to do repairs. We've seen too many cases where this type of work is poor quality or value or straight cons at worst.

"Elderly residents in particular are vulnerable and targeted. In trading standards we regularly deal with complaints where vast sums of money have been paid, following intimidating tactics, for worthless, substandard work.

"Follow our dos and don'ts and it should help you get someone in to carry out the repairs you need", added Paul. He urges:

DO...

Ask friends and family for recommendations.

Get quotes detailing the work to be carried out as well as the full cost.

Make sure you know who you are dealing with. You should have the full business details including name, address and contact details. A mobile phone number without an address is no use, if the trader ignores your calls you have no way of tracking them down.

Check if guarantees are insurance-backed.

Avoid paying cash, cheques give you proof of payment, credit cards give you the added protection of claiming against the provider if the trader goes bust.

Get receipts.

If you don't know the trader and can't get recommended traders, look for someone who is a member of an Office of Fair Trading-approved trade association scheme. Contact 0845 7224499 or visit [www.oft.gov.uk](#)

Contact Care and Repair Renfrewshire. If you are over 60 they carry out some minor repairs free of charge. Call 0141 812 4111.

Contact Consumer Direct on 08454 040506 if you wish to make a complaint/get consumer advice.

Contact the council's own 'ring and report' line on 0800 0130076 if you

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suspect a fraudulent worker is operating in East Renfrewshire. Take a note of the registration number of the van or car and any other details.

DON'T...

Employ workers who knock on your door or deliver leaflets without checking their trading background. Make sure you have an address and a land line number.

Don't pay up front. It is reasonable to pay in stages or on completion of the job.

Don't pay if you are unhappy with the workmanship. Trading Standards may be able to put you in touch with an independent expert to examine the job.

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