



consumer tip

BBB Serving Central, Northern & Western Arizona
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Be Cautious When Answering Your Door to Salespeople

(Prescott, AZ – August 16, 2010) What would you do if a stranger knocked on your door—with a deal that’s hard to resist? Local residents are reporting to Better Business Bureau (BBB) an increase of “hard to resist” deals on products and services at their front door like auto glass repair; home security and alarm systems; auto care services; magazine sales; and general home repair.

“While a door-to-door salesperson may look honest, use common sense and caution—you don’t have to open the door to people you don’t know,” states Matthew Fehling, BBB President/CEO. “Ask questions and check out a business before making any purchase on the spot.”

BBB recommends the following steps before buying something from a door-to-door sales rep:

- **Use common sense.** Be cautious when someone you don’t know knocks at your door. Don’t let strangers in your home. If you are expecting a service representative or repairman, verify identification.
- **Do your research.** Ask the salesmen for written materials about the company and let them know you are going to research them first before doing business with them. Check the company’s Reliability Report with your BBB at www.arizonabbb.org.
- **Check out licensure requirements.** Many communities have licensing and permit requirements for selling door-to-door (such as a “peddler’s license”); confirm with your city or town government that the seller is in compliance with the law. For companies offering home repairs or security alarm installations, research the company with the state regulatory agency for licensed contractors, the Arizona Registrar of Contractors, www.azag.gov or 877-692-9762.
- **Don’t fall for empty promises.** A seller might claim to offer a 100 percent satisfaction guarantee or a free gift card to a restaurant or retailer. As a consumer, make sure the restaurant or retailer accepts the gift card that was given from the seller,

and be sure you have a way to contact the seller should you have a problem. Check for a permanent place of business with an address and a phone number.

- **Consider payment with a credit card.** When paying by check or credit card you have at least some way to protect your money—such as canceling the check or reporting it as fraud to your credit card company. Of course you want to exercise due diligence and caution in giving your credit card or bank information to a stranger who shows up at your door. If you pay with cash and are dissatisfied, you're at the mercy of the salesman.
- **Know your rights.** If you decide to make a purchase, ask for a dated cancellation form and a dated receipt. If certain criteria are met, the [Federal Trade Commission Cooling-Off Rule](#) gives you three business days to cancel a purchase over \$25. Saturday is considered a business day.
- **Get it in writing.** If you are considering hiring a company, get all information and verbal promises in writing that clearly outlines the terms and conditions of the purchase. If signing a contract, take the time to read it thoroughly, check to see if there are any hidden costs, and have all questions answered to your satisfaction before signing.
- **Report the bad guys.** If you feel that you were ripped off by a door-to-door salesman, file a complaint with your Better Business Bureau. Also report to the appropriate city, county or regulatory authorities.

For more information visit www.arizonabbb.org or call your BBB, 928-772-3410 (Prescott) or 602-264-1721 (Phoenix).

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For more information or to schedule an interview with a BBB spokesperson, contact Mary Hawkes at 928-772-3410 or mhawkes@arizonabbb.org.

About BBB Serving Central, Northern & Western Arizona

BBB is an unbiased organization that sets and upholds high standards for fair and honest business behavior. Businesses that earn BBB accreditation contractually agree and adhere to the organization's high standards of ethical business behavior. Incorporated locally in 1938, today your BBB serves communities in Central, Northern and Western Arizona, supported by over 9,400 BBB Accredited Businesses. BBB provides objective advice, free business BBB Reliability Reports™ and charity BBB Wise Giving Reports™, and educational information on topics affecting marketplace trust.