

Perth & Kinross Local Area Commander's Bulletin

DOOR STEP CRIME

Even in these unprecedented times it is with regret that I have to inform you that a small number within our communities are using the fear and isolation of the current situation to exploit our most vulnerable residents.

Last week a 34-year-old male from Perth was charged with fraud after being found in Stanley having taken money from an elderly lone female for work that was not undertaken.

I have no doubt that there are many other unscrupulous criminals currently looking to target victims and, with the lockdown set to continue and the improved weather of the last week, many householders are focussing on maintaining their homes and particularly their gardens. Unfortunately, this also means an increase in 'Bogus Callers', who only want to deprive householders of their money by providing overpriced sub-standard work. This is being exacerbated by so many elderly people being isolated due to the current restrictions. From bogus callers to rogue traders, doorstep criminals are cunning, creative, and often very convincing.

Anyone can be fooled as these people are professional con artists. However, the over 60s are often specifically targeted. The following link has been produced to help prevent **you** becoming a victim of 'Doorstep Crime and Bogus Callers'. <http://www.scotland.police.uk/keep-safe/personal-safety/doorstep-crime-and-bogus-callers>

What is doorstep crime?

- **Bogus callers** try to get into your home by pretending to be someone they're not, including council staff, meter readers, or even police officers. In reality, they are crooks trying to steal cash and valuables.
- **Rogue traders** claim to be workers offering to make repairs or carry out work on your house, garden or driveway. In reality, they charge inflated prices for shoddy or unnecessary work.

What can I do?

- Be on guard if someone turns up unexpectedly. Genuine caller make appointments first.
- Always put the door chain or bar on before opening the door.
- Keep it on while talking to callers.
- Don't feel embarrassed – genuine callers expect you to be careful.
- If you don't have a door chain, get one fitted.

Check ID

- Ask for ID from anyone who comes to your door, whether you expect them or not.
- Genuine callers will carry company photo ID and show it when you ask.
- Keep the door chained while you inspect their ID.
- If the caller is unexpected, ring their office to confirm their identity. Don't use the number on their ID card, look it up in the telephone directory or a recent bill. Genuine callers won't mind waiting.
- Don't assume a caller is genuine because they are wearing a uniform.

If in doubt, shut them out!

- If you have any doubts, tell the caller to come back when someone else is home. Genuine callers won't mind rearranging.
- You can tell callers to contact you by letter to arrange a more convenient time.
- Only let callers in if they have an appointment, and you are absolutely sure they are genuine.

Who should I call...

...if I feel threatened, unsafe, or suspicious of a caller?

- Contact the police immediately on 999

...if I see something suspicious in my area, or want more advice about bogus callers?

- Contact the police on 101.
- Try and take a note of vehicle details or registration numbers, and descriptions of anyone suspicious.

...if I want to contact the police anonymously?

- Contact the independent charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111. Or visit www.crimestoppers-uk.org

...to find out more about home safety services?

- When circumstances allow contact your local council for more information. Depending on your circumstances, you may qualify for a free security alarm.

Beat bogus callers

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep front and back doors locked.• Fit a door chain or bar, and use it.• Only let callers in if they have an appointment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Always ask for ID and check it carefully.• Don't keep large sums of money at home.• Call 999 and ask for the police if you feel threatened or scared. |
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So if you see work being carried out at a vulnerable neighbour's house or even vans slowly touring your neighbourhood (often with no logos or livery), then please contact the Police so that we can investigate. I can assure you that you will not be wasting our time.