

Don't be a victim

- Keep front and back doors **LOCKED**
- Fit a door bar/chain and **USE** it
- Only deal with callers by **APPOINTMENT**
- **ALWAYS** ask for an identity card and **CHECK** it carefully
- **DO NOT** keep large sums of money in the home.

Beware

Doorstep sellers may use lines like these to get into your home:

- 'Congratulations! You've won a prize! If you could just sign here for it. . .'
- 'I noticed you've got a few loose tiles on your roof. . .'
- 'There have been a lot of burglaries round here. . .'
- 'This cut-price special offer is only available if you sign today. . .'
- 'I'm doing a survey. . .'

Remember, doorstep sellers can be extremely persuasive. Once you let a doorstep seller into your home, they will expect a sale – and they won't give up easily.

Local authority logo here

DOORSTEP SELLING – YOUR RIGHTS



Know your rights

Cooling Off Period

- If the goods and services you buy cost more than £35, and you did not invite the seller to call, then you generally have seven days to change your mind and cancel the contract. Responding to an advertisement in the paper or a leaflet dropped through your letterbox counts as inviting the seller to call.
- If you agree to a visit after the seller rings you up or sends someone round to ask if he or she can visit, you still have the right to cancel within seven days.

Your right to cancel

- By law, the seller must give you **written** details of your right to cancel (there are exceptions to this rule). Failure to do this is a criminal offence, and the contract cannot be enforced against you. Details of the right to cancel may be set out in the body of the contract, or you may be given a separate form.
- If you **are** entitled to cancellation rights but are not given details in **writing** then the agreement cannot be enforced and you don't have to pay a penny, even if goods or services have already been supplied.
- If you **do** cancel the contract, and goods have already been delivered, you must keep them safe and let the seller collect them.
- If you **are** given written details of your rights and decide to cancel the contract, you can get back any **money** you paid. But if you have received certain goods or services which would be awkward or virtually impossible to hand back (eg perishable goods or home improvement services), then you will have to pay for what you have received, even if you cancel the contract.
- If **you** make the first contact with the seller, and invite them to call, you have no legal right to change your mind and cancel the contract. There are two exceptions:
 1. if the contract specifically gives you cancellation rights;
 2. if you bought the goods or service on credit in which case you will generally have five days to cancel.

This leaflet is a simplified statement of the law and does not spell out all the exceptions in the legislation.

Case studies

Two pensioners from Haverhill, Suffolk, received a phone call saying they had won a free holiday. When a representative of the company called at their house, he persuaded the couple to buy a vacuum cleaner for £1,600. They later got their money back after complaining to their local trading standards officer. . .

'We didn't need or want a vacuum cleaner but he was so persuasive we didn't know what to do. The whole experience has made us very wary of doorstep sales. Now we simply say "no thanks" and shut the door.'

Cowboy builders persuaded a Yorkshire pensioner to part with £300 for home repairs, £100 more than the price he thought he had verbally agreed with them. . .

'I felt intimidated into giving them the money. I wrote asking for a refund but the letter was returned with "address unknown" stamped on it, so it's clear they were a bogus firm.'

A 79-year-old Sunderland man was persuaded by doorstep salesmen to have a small patio built for £1,300. They demanded half the money up front, and even drove him to his bank so he could withdraw the money. His son tried unsuccessfully to cancel the contract and retrieve his father's money. . .

'My father gets confused sometimes and didn't realise he was being massively overcharged for a job I could do for £500.'

DOORSTOPPERS
SAY NO TO DOORSTEP CALLERS

Local authority contact details here