

Door-to-Door Solicitation

Durham is often subject to unsolicited door-to-door solicitors. Be cautious if you get an unsolicited offer at your door. Organized groups known as “travelers” move from state to state posing as contractors. They often distribute flyers and knock on doors. They may ask for cash up front or may take a check and cash it right away, never returning to do the work. If they perform work, it is usually **substandard**.

Typical Scams:

- **Roof repair:** They may slide a few new shingles under old ones, and then spray the roof with useless oil.
- **Sealant:** They use a watery liquid or oil as a fake sealant on driveways, fencing, or roofing.
- **Paving:** Their workmanship is substandard, usually only laying down a thin layer of paving that soon breaks part.
- **Leftover materials:** They say they will save you money by using leftover materials from another house in the area.
- **Diversion:** One person distracts you while the other slips into the house to steal valuables.
- **Misrepresentation:** Posing as workers from a legitimate company. Usually they ask to be paid in advance with cash, sometimes offering discounts for cash.

Red Flags:

- Unmarked vehicles with out-of-state plates.
- Business card does not list a CCB license number (or lists a fake one). It may also give an 800 phone number and a PO Box as an address.
- The people seem friendly but talk fast to confuse you and use scare tactics, saying your repairs must be done immediately or your home will be unsafe.
- An offer for a discount if you find them more customers in the area.
- Resistance to a written estimate and contract.
- A very low estimate. A price that is too good to be true often turns into a nightmare.

Protect yourself

All contractors must have City business license or a Metro business license. Additionally, if the work requires a permit or a degree of professional knowledge, they should have a CCB license. Contractors with CCB licenses must meet experience and/or education requirements and pass a competency exam. They must obtain a surety bond and submit evidence of liability insurance. The City’s website has a license search for landscape and building contractors. Go to “Additional Resources” to find the links.

The City has an ordinance that limits the hours of solicitors can ring your door from 8 am to 9 pm. The ordinance requires that they obtain and carry a copy of a current valid City Business License and prohibits them from soliciting where a home has a “No Solicitors” sign posted.

To assist residents this website has two versions of a sign that can be printed and posted. They are located in the “Other Permits and Forms” section under “Misc. Permits and Forms.” If you have a sign posted and a solicitor still rings your doorbell, you simply have to point to the sign and state that they are breaking the laws of the City and it should be enough to get them to leave your premises.