

Montgomery County
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For Immediate Release
July 1, 2011

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During the summer months door-to-door sales are often active. The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office is investigating recent citizen complaints of an individual or individuals selling educational materials door-to-door in Montgomery County. Be cautious when dealing with door-to-door salesmen, as not all of them are legitimate. Chapter 5-2 of the Code of Montgomery County requires any individual soliciting door-to-door obtain a Solicitor's Permit.

Prohibited acts under Section 5-2 include that no person shall:

- A. Enter into or upon a residential premise in the county under false pretenses to solicit for any purpose or for the purpose of soliciting orders for the sale of goods, wares, merchandise, or service.
- B. Remain in or on any residential premises after the owner or occupant has requested any such person to leave.
- C. Enter upon any residential premises for soliciting, when the owner or occupant has displayed a "No Soliciting" sign on such premises.
- D. Engage in the practice of soliciting in the county without a permit.

The Solicitor's Permit is valid for one year from the date of issuance and may be rescinded by an order of the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors..

Montgomery County residents are encouraged to ask anyone soliciting in the county to show their approved Solicitor's Permit. If they cannot present one, don't talk to them and call your local law enforcement agency. The Sheriff's Office recommends that residents don't allow any salesmen into your home, never give out any personal information such as date of birth, social security number, credit card numbers, or bank account numbers to anyone. Call 911 if you feel that you are being harassed or the person won't leave your property when asked to do so.

Remember that a salesman's job is to sell their product and they are usually very good at it; so are con artists, please beware. Don't buy any product you do not want

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or cannot pay for. A reliable salesman will allow you to take time to think things over. Don't fall for high pressure sales tactics.

Other safety tips when dealing with solicitors include:

1. Always ask for identification and soliciting permit.
2. Never pay with cash.
3. Write checks only to the company, not an individual.
4. Don't answer the door if you don't know who it is.
5. Display a "Do Not Solicit" sign on your property.
6. Get a written receipt with the business name, phone number, and address.
7. Virginia law allows you three days to cancel purchases of goods and services on sales made from which a home solicitation was conducted. If a "Buyer's Right to Cancel" clause is not included and the company won't accept a written cancelation, contact the local or State Consumer Protection Office.
8. Never sign a contract unless you completely understand it and know the total cost.
9. Contact the Better Business Bureau to see if consumer complaints have been filed against a company or charity.
10. If you suspect fraud, contact local law enforcement.