

25th February 2022

Rogue Traders

With the recent named storms (Dudley, Eunice & Franklin) battering Britain during the past fortnight, many of us suffered fallen trees, damage to chimneys, roof tiles, fence panels and sheds, now we need to get the damage fixed and find suitable builders/tradespersons.

Trouble is rogue traders will use occasions like bad storms to prey upon unsuspecting victims. They will often go to an area and look for signs of elderly residents, such as key-safes, door ramps and decor. They will then call on those vulnerable residents and offer to carry out either unnecessary work or heavily overpriced and substandard work.

Often the rogue traders will use aggressive or pressure selling tactics in order to obtain agreement to have work done from their vulnerable customers. So be wary of any tradespersons who cold call and knock at your door, however also be cautious of leaflets put through your letterbox and websites recommending trades people. This is another way some rogue traders may try to reel you in, making misleading or false claims and posting fake references.

How to stay safe from Rogue Traders?

Remember to Take Five mins before acting:

STOP - Taking a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information could keep you safe.

CHALLENGE - Could it be fake? It's ok to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you. Get other quotes to compare prices.

PROTECT - Contact your bank immediately if you think you've fallen for a scam and report it to Action Fraud.



TO STOP FRAUD™

STOP. CHALLENGE. PROTECT.



If you have any information about possible organised crime, victims of such crime or vulnerable people subject of exploitation, please inform Essex Police or CrimeStoppers on 0800 555111

Keep up to date and
do **even more** Online **at** essex.police.uk



Rogue Traders and Burglary Offences

There have been links between some rogue traders and burglary offences being committed a couple of weeks later at the address where they have done work. It is believed they use the time doing the work to establish what valuables the victims have.

So how do I find a trust worthy tradesperson?

You may have friends and families who have used excellent builders and tradespersons before, so the risk of them being a rogue trader is greatly reduced through this recommendations. However if you have no such recommendations, what should you do?

In response to concerns about 'rogue traders' a partnership of Local Authority Trading Standards Services took the ground-breaking step of putting together the **Buy With Confidence Scheme**. The scheme provides consumers with a list of local businesses which have given their commitment to trading fairly. Every business listed has undergone a series of detailed checks before being approved as a member of the scheme.

In order to become a Buy With Confidence member, a business must first apply or be recommended to join the scheme and must then pass a set of tailored background checks. Membership of the scheme is not given lightly – amongst other checks, each applicant will have their complaints history reviewed and will be audited by a Trading Standards qualified person. Good references are required from previous customers and applicants must agree to abide by the scheme's code of conduct, which requires them to follow the letter and spirit of the law. Criminal records basic disclosure may also be required in some circumstances.

Only if all the scheme requirements are met, will a business be granted membership, and their conduct will continue to be monitored thereafter. We cannot promise that Buy With Confidence members' work will be perfect every time, but you can expect any problems to be dealt with fairly by the business, and you can turn to Trading Standards for advice in the event of an unresolved issue.

www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk

How to report possible offences, concerns or to give information?

If you are a victim of, or have any information about any of the above offences, please report this via one of the below methods.

Essex Police via 999 for offences being committed at that time or via 101 or online at www.essex.police.uk

CrimeStoppers in order to give information anonymously — 0800 555 111

Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 0808 223 1133



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