

Police receive reports of bogus callers offering to clean gutters and carrying out shoddy work

Police have received reports of bogus workmen operating in Edinburgh, offering to clean gutters and carrying out shoddy work.

If you think a bogus workman has called on you contact police on 101 or 999.



Bogus callers try to get into your home or get personal details by pretending to be someone they're not. This can include council staff, charity collectors, meter readers and police officers. In reality, they are criminals trying to steal money and valuables. Rogue traders usually cold-call. They claim to be workers offering services, make repairs or carry out work on your property. In reality they charge inflated prices for shoddy or work that isn't needed.

How can I spot a rogue trader?

They tell you the work needs to be done immediately. They will ask to be paid there and then. They may offer to go to the bank with you if you don't have the cash at hand.

Here are some tips to follow to protect yourself. Be on guard if someone turns up unexpectedly. Keep front and back doors locked. Use the door viewer or nearby window when answering the door. Fit a door chain or bar – use it and keep it on when

talking to callers at the door. If you're not sure, don't answer the door

Don't feel embarrassed – genuine callers expect you to be careful. Only let callers in if they have an appointment – confirm they are genuine. Always ask for identification badges, but don't rely on them. Identity cards can be faked – phone the company to verify their identity. Some companies offer a password system – ask if this can be used. If you have a password with a company make sure the caller uses it. Never let people persuade you to let them into your home – they may not be genuine.

If someone is persistent, ask them to call at another time and get a friend or family member to be with you. Never agree to pay for goods or give money to strangers who arrive at your door. Don't keep large amounts of money in your home. Remember, it's your home, there's no reason why anyone should ever enter your home against your wishes. If you're not sure, don't answer the door.

Trading Standards advice is: Don't feel pressurised into agreeing to immediate work or buying a product or service. Don't agree to buy from the first person who calls. Don't pay cash up front. Don't offer to go and get money. Shop around if you decide you need work done. Ask what your cancellation rights are. Report them.

Here are some tips if you think someone is a doorstep criminal.

Keep the caller out of your house. Ask them to leave and call the police immediately on 101.

You might also want to try to alert a family member or attract a neighbour's attention. You should always contact the police first by dialling 101.

The police would much rather attend a false alarm than have

someone fall victim to a doorstep criminal.

If the person refuses to leave your door, or you feel threatened or scared – call 999 and ask for the police.

Note down their description and the description of any vehicle they're using, including make, model, colour and registration number.

Discuss the advice on this page with family, friends or neighbours who are older or vulnerable.

There are also other things you can do to help protect them. Everyone has a part to play to keep the community safe.

Keep an eye out for strange vans in your neighbour's driveway

Make sure your relatives are not regularly taking large amounts of cash out of the bank

Make arrangements to ensure your relative's house looks well maintained

Make it less obvious that an older person lives alone

Doorstep criminals will often target the same victim more than once. Be alert if someone has been a victim before

Police Scotland has a 'Nominated Neighbour Scheme' which can assist those who prefer not to answer the door to those they don't know (read our Nominated Neighbour leaflet)

Report any suspicious activity in your community immediately to Police Scotland on 101 or to your local authority Trading Standards

For more information on doorstep crime or assistance regarding home security contact your local Community Policing Team on 101.