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Construction scams “drift” into town this summer

It’s like clock work. When the weather improves, the scam artist strikes. And they usually strike the person that appears most vulnerable.

“Older adults tend to be targets because of mobility issues,” says Gina Fox, Public Information Officer for the Construction Contractors Board (CCB). “They may not be able to climb on the roof or crawl into a crawlspace to look at problems or repairs.”

They also tend to be more trusting.

The CCB is warning homeowners of a scam that recently came to light in the Gresham area. In this recent event the homeowner was approached by the male subject – driving a white pickup with Nevada plates– about doing some work for the homeowner. The man had a sad story to tell and even a wife and kids at his side. When the homeowner agreed to have the work performed, the man found more problems which could be fixed at a higher price.

Generally, the work performed is substandard at best and the “material” used in this case to seal the leak in the roof turned out to be nothing more than ordinary latex paint.

While door-to door sales can be legitimate, be wary of those who are peddling left over materials, have sad tales or use high pressure tactics to get you to accept their offer without a chance to think it over, or do your homework. Be careful of drifters—unlicensed contractors that drift in from out of state, scam unsuspecting homeowners and run.

“Always check on a contractor’s license”, says Fox. “Make sure your contractor is actively licensed, which means they have a bond and liability insurance, and check their complaint history.”

The CCB is a state agency licensing more than 42,000 contractors. Anyone who is paid to repair, improve or build a home must be licensed by the CCB. Consumers can verify a contractor’s license and find other helpful tips at www.oregon.gov/ccb and clicking on Consumer Help. Consumers can also call 503-378-4621.

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