

# Bogus caller and rogue traders

## Your guide to crime prevention

### What is a bogus caller?

Most people who call at your home will be genuine. However, occasionally bogus callers or rogue traders may turn up unannounced and try to:

- trick their way into your home to steal valuables or money
- sell you services or items you do not want or need
- carry out unnecessary repairs to your home at inflated prices.

They may work alone or in pairs, and could be male or female. They could pretend to be from the local council, say they work for a water, gas or electric company, or use children to trick their way in to your home.

If you have concerns about anyone calling at your home, **don't open the door**.

Here are some tips on what to do if a stranger calls.

### If in doubt, keep them out

- Lock your back door and close windows before you answer the door.
- Use a spy hole and chain to check who the caller is before you answer.
- Ask to see the caller's identification, even if they have made an appointment to see you, and call their company yourself (not on a number they provide) to check they are genuine.
- Never leave the door open and unattended – close it until you return.
- Ask the caller to return another time when someone can be with you.
- Never agree to have a job carried out if you feel unsure or pressured into it – a genuine caller will not mind coming back at a more convenient time or giving you time to think about an offer.
- Do not hand over large sums of money on demand – it may indicate that you keep large amounts of cash at home.
- Never accept an offer to be driven to withdraw money from your bank or building society from anyone you do not know or do not trust.

### Check the caller's identification

- Check the expiry date on the identification - is it still valid?
- Look at the photograph – has anything been stuck over it, and does it match the person at the door?
- Call the company by finding the number in the phone book, on a bill or call directory enquiries. Do not use the number the caller provides – if the ID card is not genuine then the number won't be either.
- Ask the company to confirm they have sent someone out to you. They will ask you for information about the identification card, a description of the caller and possibly the date of birth or password of the caller.



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## Set up passwords with your utility companies

- Set up a password with your electricity, gas and water companies – each password should be unique but something you will remember.
- When a representative calls at your home, they will give you this unique password to confirm they are legitimate.
- If you write your passwords down, keep them out of sight but somewhere you can easily find them.

## Secure your home

- Fit security measures to your home such as a spy hole and door chain so you can see who is calling before you open the front door.
- Never leave cash, keys or valuables on display near windows or doors.
- Avoid keeping large amounts of money at home. It is safer in a bank or building society account.
- Consider getting a small safe for your home for items of sentimental value such as jewellery, which may appeal to burglars.
- Only use trusted or highly recommended companies or individuals to carry out work at your home.
- Check out the Age UK HandyVan service, which can fit a range of safety and security products to your home for a small fee. For more details call **0845 026 1055** or email **handyvan@ageuk.co.uk**
- Join your local Neighbourhood Watch scheme – for details call **01622 653212** or visit **www.kent.police.uk/neighbourhoodwatch** or **www.ourwatch.org.uk**

## Report information about bogus callers and rogue traders

- If you think you have a bogus caller at your door call **999**
- To give information about a possible bogus caller call the police on **101**
- If you have information about a rogue trader, have agreed to have work done or need advice about work carried out already, contact Trading Standards via the Citizens' Advice Consumer Helpline on **08454 04 05 06**.

## Contact us

Report a crime

- Call **101** to report a non-urgent crime or to contact your local officer
- Call **999** if a crime is in progress or life is in danger
- If you are deaf or speech-impaired, text '**police**' and your message to **60066**
- Visit your nearest police front counter to report non-urgent crime

News, information and advice:

- Speak to an officer – at a police surgery, at a front counter or by calling **101**
- Visit our website – **www.kent.police.uk**
- Follow **@kent\_police** or your district account on Twitter
- Find us on **Facebook**
- Chat to officers online – **www.kent.police.uk/onlinemeeting**
- Sign up for your fortnightly district e newsletters – **www.kent.police.uk/enews**

For details of all the ways to contact us, visit **www.kent.police.uk/contactus**

For other information guides in this series, visit **www.kent.police.uk/yourguide**