

Once again, Precinct 7 officers are responding to an ***increase in calls for service regarding door-to-door solicitors in residential neighborhoods***. And, as in the past, we are finding that some of these solicitors are licensed and legitimate and some are not. Here are a few of the past sales spiels given by some questionable solicitors:

1. Selling books to support a local children's hospital.
2. Selling books to help sponsor a local traveling baseball team's effort to make it to a national competition.
3. Selling books to help support a scholarship for the seller to fly to London for a summer internship as she or he studies for a degree in communications.
4. Selling books/goods/wares/subscriptions for any reason which arouses suspicions in a homeowner listening to the sales pitch. Some solicitors will actually tell you that they are neighbors of yours (they aren't) who live "right around the corner" (they don't) and may mention the names of other neighbors (easily available in many computer databases including Maryland Real property Search) in an effort to gain your confidence. The intent of this email is NOT to suggest that all door-to-door solicitors are fraudulent or are there to scam you for money. However, please be cautious and check into the veracity of the solicitor's claims as to where the money is going. If you're not sure, or you just don't feel "right" about it, check into the background of the supposed company before making any financial donation.

Also, be aware of the following:

1. Solicitors in Baltimore County are required to be licensed as peddlers/hucksters through the Clerk's Office of the Baltimore County Circuit Court.
2. Solicitors must carry that license with them.
3. The license does not give the solicitor the right to remain on your property after being told to leave. Additionally, the Baltimore County Code was recently amended to tighten up regulations pertaining to neighborhood door-to-door solicitors. Here is that excerpt from The Baltimore County Code Article 21-11-106:

c) "No soliciting" signs; sunset.

(1) A person subject to this title may not offer any service or item of merchandise for sale to the occupant of a residential property in the county if the owner or occupant has visibly displayed on the property a "no soliciting" sign, or a sign containing similar words.

(2) The prohibition of paragraph (1) applies to all residences in a neighborhood or community if the neighborhood or community has displayed a "no soliciting" sign, or a sign containing similar words, at each vehicle entrance to the neighborhood or community.

(3) A person subject to this title may not offer any service or item of merchandise for sale to the occupant of a residential property in the county before 9:00 a.m. or after 7:00 p.m., or sunset on any day, whichever is earlier. "Sunset" means the time of day identified by the National Weather Service as the time for sunset on that day in the Baltimore metropolitan area. (END OF EXCERPT)

Based on the County Code, Section C-1 above means a homeowner may post his or her individual residence with a prominent sign such as "No Solicitors". Any solicitor, even one who is properly licensed, may not lawfully approach to solicit that residence. Section C-2 means that a "community", say for example, the Loveton Condo/Town Home community, may place a prominent "No Soliciting" sign at each vehicular entrance to that community. Those signs would then cover each residence within that community to prevent solicitors. Finally, Section C-3 means that even if the solicitor is properly licensed and is in a community or at a residence that does not prohibit solicitors, he or she cannot solicit door-to-door before 9:00 AM or after 7:00 p.m., or sunset on any day, whichever is earlier. That means on the "longer" days of summer, 7:00 PM is the deadline. However, for that week or two in November-December when the sun "officially" sets earlier (generally in the 4:45 PM range) the deadline is sunset time even though it's before 7 PM! The revised law also pertains to those who go door-to-door to offer a "free estimate" for some type of service. We strongly suggest to area residents NOT allow any door-to-door solicitors into your home. If you allow the person to give the sales pitch, listen to it through the door. ASK

to see their Baltimore County Huckster's License that they are required to carry. If the person makes you feel uncomfortable, simply tell the person to leave your premises and not return. Remember...it's YOUR home and you are NOT required to allow them entry and you are NOT required to listen to a sales pitch. If you don't want them there, tell them to leave. If they refuse, call 911. If solicitors violate county law, the police can - and have - arrest the solicitors if they continue to trespass on your property after being told to leave. Call 911 if you have concerns about the activities of any door-to-door solicitors.

Thank you and stay safe!

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