



## **Door to Door Sales: Beware of Potential Fraud**

If the “summer sales” phenomenon has not occurred in your community, it is most likely not far away. This business model has young men and women (usually college students) going door to door selling alarm systems during the spring and summer months. Some use ethical sales practices, but many do not. Various state, provincial and local officials have filed suit and/or entered into settlement agreements with numerous companies for deceptive sales practices.

The salespeople use high pressure and deceptive sales tactics to gain entry into homes and then sign up unsuspecting citizens to long term alarm contracts, even if they already have a contract with another alarm company. Be very, very careful of any salesperson who comes to your home without a prior appointment claiming to be from your alarm company and asking you to sign anything.

### **Be on the lookout for door-to-door solicitors who:**

- Imply they are from your existing alarm company and are there to test, upgrade or replace your existing alarm system. Reputable alarm companies will **not** send technicians to your home unannounced.
- Claim that your alarm company has gone out of business, that they have taken over the accounts and that you need to buy new equipment and/or sign new contracts. Never take their word for it – immediately contact your alarm company for verification.
- Say that you need to take advantage of the offer TODAY. Reputable alarm companies will provide you with the time you need to carefully consider your purchase. US, State or Provincial laws provide you with a cooling off period of 3 days or more where you can cancel any contract when a company representative visits your home. You have a right to cancel your contract even if the alarm company has installed the equipment.
- State that your alarm system is vulnerable or can be disabled easily – they do not know what type of alarm system you have so cannot make this claim.
- Wear polo shirts with alarm manufacturer names on them, such as GE or Honeywell, claim to work for them and need to inspect your keypad or control panel because it may be slated for replacement. This is just a trick utilized to gain entry to your home.
- Greet you by name to seem friendly – they may have read your name off the mailbox or looked at property records to determine the owner’s name.

### **Steps you can take to avoid being scammed:**

- Do not let any door-to-door solicitor into your home. Some consumer protection agencies warn homeowners not to even open their doors to solicitors, but, rather, to speak to them through the closed door and send them on their way.
- If you are confronted by a salesperson outside, ask to see their license – this may be a license issued by the state to engage in the business of selling, installing or monitoring alarms, or it could be a Solicitor’s License that permits them to engage in door-to-door sales.
- Call your alarm company any time a salesperson claims to be a representative of your alarm company and is trying to get you to sign a contract or have work done on your alarm system.
- Do not be pressured into signing a contract. If you tell a salesperson you are not interested, but they persist in pressuring you, call the police.