

BBB Tip: Door-to-Door Sales!

Submitted by Kelvin H. Collins, President/CEO, Better Business Bureau

Serving the Fall Line Corridor, Inc. • BBB.org/central-georgia • Office: 478.742.9034 (Direct)

OFFICES: Macon: 277 M.L. King Jr. Blvd, Ste 201, Macon, GA 31201 • Augusta: 119 Davis Road, Ste 3-B, Augusta, GA 30907 • Columbus: 233 12th Street, Ste 911-B, Columbus, GA 31901

Better Business Bureau (BBB) is noticing an increase in calls related to door-to-door sales. Door-to-door salespeople offer a range of services, including [paving](#), pine straw, magazine subscriptions, security alarms, and other products and services. Many door-to-door salespeople are legitimate, but others might only be looking to make a sale and then move on.

BBB recommends people have a plan in place prior to hearing that tell-tale knock at your door:

- **Ask about licensing.** Many cities require door-to-door salespeople to have a peddler or solicitor license. Ask if the salesperson has checked in with the city and gotten proper licensing. Not sure? Call the city or county offices to verify.
- **Check identification.** A reputable seller will provide all the information asked of them, including a photo ID and a business card.
- **Verify the individual and the company.** A reputable salesperson should not have a problem with having their identity checked with a quick phone call to the company, especially if they claim to be with your existing vendor. Research the company and contact them to check if the salesperson is in fact an employee. Read the company's Business Profile and customer reviews at BBB.org.
- **Read the contract closely.** If you are interested in a product or service, get everything in writing including price, contract details and all other terms and conditions. Tell the salesperson the proposal will be reviewed, and a decision will be made. Verify the physical address and valid contact information for the company are included. Read and understand all the terms and conditions carefully before signing on the dotted line.
- **Don't give in to pressure.** Watch out for high-pressure sales tactics and be aware that anything you sign could construe a contract. If you feel pressured, end the sales pitch.
- **Do the Math.** Paying \$30 to \$40 per month for subscriptions or monitoring may not sound like much, but it can add up. Be wary of automatically renewing subscriptions and make sure you check the average costs for any product that interests you. Most magazines have detachable postcards inside with some of the lowest rates available.
- **Know your rights.** The Federal Trade Commission's Three-Day Cooling-Off Rule gives the customer three days to cancel purchases over \$25 that are made in their home or at a location that is not the seller's permanent place of business. Along with a receipt, salespeople should also include a completed cancellation form that customers can send to the company to cancel the agreement.
- **Stand strong.** Be careful about allowing strangers into your home. If you do allow a salesperson inside your home and decide during the presentation that you are not interested in making a purchase, simply ask them to leave. If the salesperson refuses to leave, tell them you will call the police – and follow through if they do not leave immediately.

People who have issues with door-to-door solicitors can file a complaint on BBB.org, as well as reporting anyone suspicious with their local law enforcement.

Kelvin Collins is president & CEO of the Better Business Bureau serving the Fall Line Corridor, serving 77 counties in East Alabama, West Georgia, Southwest Georgia, Central Georgia, East Georgia, and Western South Carolina. This tips column is provided through the local BBB and the International Association of Better Business Bureaus (IABBB). The Better Business Bureau sets standards for ethical business behavior, monitors compliance and helps consumers identify trustworthy businesses. Questions or complaints about a specific company or charity should be referred directly to the BBB at Phone: 1-800-763- 4222, Web site: BBB.org or E-mail: info@centralgeorgia.bbb.org.