



ANSWERING THE DOOR: Beware of ...

Bogus callers

People who call at your home may well be genuine. However, it is a good idea to take precautions when answering the door to people you don't know.

Bogus callers are people who use various stories to get into your home so they can steal from you or trick you out of money. They may pose as staff from the council or a gas, water or electricity company, or even the police. Some may present themselves as an ordinary person in need of help; for example, they could ask to use your phone in an emergency.

Rogue traders

Doorstep traders are not always genuine or honest salespeople. Rogue traders may try to push you into agreeing to unnecessary home repairs or improvements, often at extortionate prices.

It can feel impossible to get rid of doorstep traders unless you agree to sign up for whatever they are selling. But ... it's your doorstep and you are in control. Don't be afraid to say no. Don't agree to anything, sign a contract or pay money until you have talked to someone else, and never let anyone persuade you to go to your bank and withdraw cash for a payment.

Above all, don't be afraid to ask a salesperson to leave. If they refuse, call the police.

Safety at the door

You don't need to feel embarrassed about refusing to let someone in. Only let someone in when you are absolutely sure they are genuine. Before you open the door, remember:

- lock all your other outer doors before you go to the front door. Some burglars work together - one keeps you chatting on the doorstep while another gets in through a back door
- think about whether you are expecting anyone
- put the door chain on (don't keep the chain on all the time as it will prevent anyone with a key from entering, such as a home help). Look through the window or spy-hole to see who is there
- ask for an identity card and examine it carefully. Check who they are by phoning the company they represent - get the number from a bill or your phone book rather than calling a number they give you, which may be false.

Remember: if in doubt, keep them out.

If you are still suspicious, dial 999 and ask for the police.

The dedicated doorstep crime hotline number: 0345 23 07 702

Northants Police (non emergency) 03000 111 222