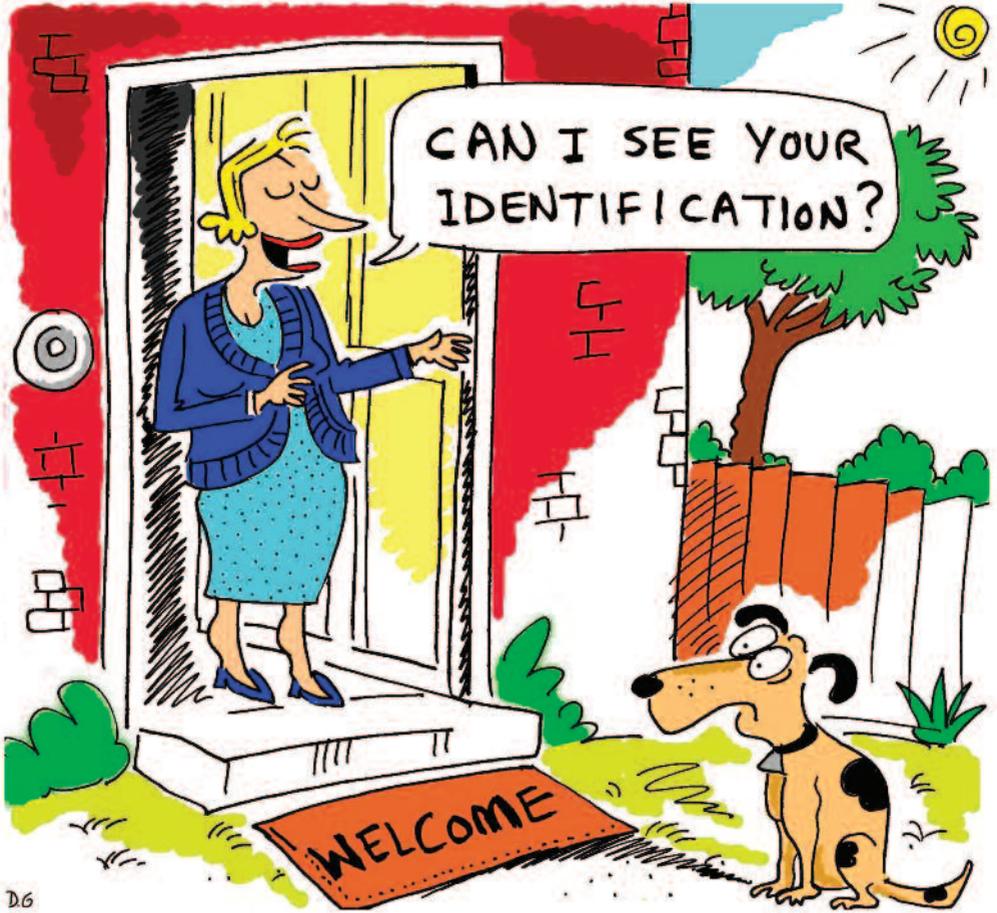
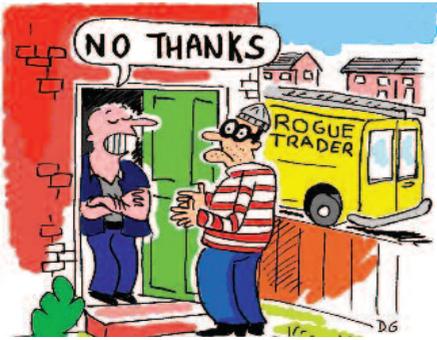


Reducing doorstep crime



Reducing doorstep crime

While most callers to your home are genuine, some are not. Certain unscrupulous individuals, known as ‘bogus callers’ or ‘distraction burglars’, may try to trick their way inside in order to steal cash or valuables.



Only use reputable workmen

Some bogus callers claim they are from the council or a utility company (a water or gas supplier for example), others simply ask for a glass of water or to come in and wash their hands. Whichever method they use, their only aim is to gain entry to your home. Bogus callers come in all shapes and sizes too. Men, women – even children – have all been involved in incidences of this despicable crime.

The advice given in this leaflet will help to lessen your chances of falling victim to these callous criminals.

Spotting bogus officials

Bogus officials are relatively easy to spot and turn away. Bear the following in mind if you suspect that an ‘official’ caller may not be genuine:

- Water company officials don’t need to access your home to test water pressure or repair a leak. If they do need to enter your house they will first write to you to arrange a suitable appointment.
- Gas or electricity company officials expect you to check their identity before letting them in. They don’t mind waiting while you do so.
- If you have any doubts at all don’t let the caller in. Telephone the company to confirm that the caller is genuine, but use a phone number from a utility bill or from The Phone Book or Yellow Pages. Never use a number given by the caller – it may be false.
- Set up a password system with each of your utility providers. This is a free service and means that whenever a genuine official calls they will use your password.

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Bogus workmen

Bogus workmen can be very persistent in persuading you that urgent work needs to be carried out on your property.

Our advice is:

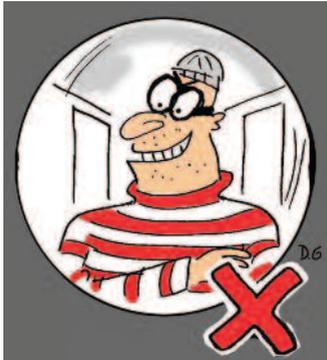
- Never agree to have any work done by someone who turns up on your doorstep and says that your home needs urgent repairs. Say No.
- If your home is in need of repair, use reputable workmen recommended by friends and family or firms that have previously worked satisfactorily for you.
- Don't be pressurised into paying workmen before they do any work, and never accept their offer to drive you to the bank to withdraw money.

Other bogus callers

- Be wary of people who knock on your door asking for a drink, looking for lost pets or asking

to use your telephone.

- Be cautious of unfamiliar youngsters saying that their ball is in your garden. They may be attempting to gain access to your home or trying to distract you from your front door.



Check a caller's identity before letting them in

Help the vulnerable

Certain people are particularly vulnerable to doorstep crime. These include elderly people living alone and those who have suffered a recent bereavement. If you know of, or are responsible for vulnerable people, you can help by:

- Giving them a copy of this leaflet.
- Helping them to set up password schemes with their utility providers.
- Keeping an eye on vulnerable neighbours.
- Reporting any suspicions of possible bogus callers to the police.

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Further tips

Although the chances of becoming a victim of a bogus caller are extremely low, it is worth taking the following steps to ensure your safety:

- If you don't have a door chain or door bar, get one fitted.
- Keep your front and back doors locked, even when you are at home.
- Do not leave money, wallets or keys within easy reach of the door.
- Lock your back door before answering the front door. Thieves sometimes work in pairs, one ringing the front door bell while the other enters at the back of the house.
- Before answering the door, stop and think 'am I expecting anyone?' Look through a spy hole or window to see who's there.
- If you decide to open the door, engage the chain or door bar. Keep the chain engaged until



Put a note by your door, available from your local police officer, to deter unwanted callers

- you are completely sure the caller is genuine.
- Never leave your front door unattended. If you need glasses to read identification or if you need to go to another room for any reason, close the door fully before doing so.
- Check the caller's identity card carefully, even if an appointment has been arranged.
- If in doubt, keep them out!

For more crime prevention advice visit www.surrey.police.uk

Contacting Surrey Police

For non-emergency calls or to contact your local police officer call **0845 125 2222*** or **01483 571212**, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Always dial **999** in an emergency.

If you have hearing difficulties or speech impairment, our minicom number is **1800** or **01483 539999**.

* The cost of calls from landlines and mobiles may vary. Surrey Police does not profit from the provision of this number.