



**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Colonel Cynthia McAlister, Purcellville Police Dept.
cmcalister@purcellvilleva.gov; 540-338-7422

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM BEING A VICTIM OF CONSTRUCTION FRAUD

PURCELLVILLE, Va. May 7, 2019 - With the beginning of warmer weather it is a popular time to begin home repairs and renovations. This leads to a search of construction companies. They are often located either by word of mouth, internet searches, door to door solicitation, or other means. We all dream that our home projects will be completed exactly as expected; enjoying the new modifications to our homes for years to come. Most contractors are legitimate, unfortunately not all are qualified, license or insured. The following reminders are provided to help during the vetting process and to aid in protecting homeowners:

- Be cautious of door to door solicitation. If the deal seems too good to be true, it most likely is.
- Check into the company prior to deciding to work with them. The Better Business Bureau (www.bbb.org) tracks complaints and scams.
- Always ask to see a state contractor's license. A reputable company should offer this even before you ask. A Virginia State Contractor's license can be verified by going to www.dpor.virginia.gov/license. Click on the left button "license lookup." A disciplinary action search is also available.
- For your protection, ensure the contractor is bonded and insured. Bonding protects the homeowner if the contractor fails to complete the job, does not pay for permits, fails to pay for supplies or subcontractors, and it covers damage that workers cause to your property. The contractor should carry two kinds of insurance, general liability and workers' compensation. General liability covers damage to your home. Workers' compensation covers anyone working on the job site who is injured on the job. General contractors can opt out of workers' compensation for themselves, but must provide it if they have even one employee. The amount of general liability insurance a contractor carries will vary, but some insurers suggest a minimum \$1 million because a mistake on even a small job can have expensive consequences.
- Get written estimates and compare bids. Before work begins, be sure to obtain a written contract that clearly lists the work to be done, the cost, including how any unforeseen expenses are addressed, as well as a start and end date. Ask about guarantees. Most companies will guarantee their work or product for a specific period of time. Be sure to get this information in writing.

- A reputable company will always be willing to provide references and will obtain the building permits. If a contractor asks you to get the permit to “save money” that should be a warning sign.
- Do not pay for work up front. Inspect the work and make sure you are satisfied before you pay. A reasonable down payment may be required, but do not pay anything without a written contract. Avoid paying with cash; use a check or credit card instead.

If a homeowner or business owner is concerned or suspicious about anyone coming to their door soliciting, they are asked to contact the non-emergency police number at 703-777-1021. The Purcellville Police Department appreciates the opportunity to address suspicious activity occurring in Town.

The Town of Purcellville, Virginia

Purcellville is an award-winning town of over 9,000 residents located in Loudoun County, approximately 40 miles west of Washington, DC. Having received the prestigious Siemens Sustainability Award for Small Communities, Purcellville continues to be honored for its green initiatives with most recently being the Tree City USA recipient for the 10th year. The Town was reaffirmed as a AAA rated community by S&P Global Ratings, the highest credit rating possible, and is recognized as one of the safest towns in Virginia. Once a stop along the W&OD rail line, Purcellville has maintained its historic old-town feel through the restoration and maintenance of its many downtown structures, reflecting the Victorian architecture popular during the early 1900s. Today, Purcellville is the economic hub of western Loudoun County and a popular weekend destination for antiquing, entertainment, farmer’s markets, wineries, breweries, distilleries and restaurants. More info at www.purcellvilleva.gov.

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