

For immediate release
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Door-to-Door Fraud Network Dismantled in Hawkesbury: The Town of Hawkesbury By-law Officers and the OPP take action

The Town of Hawkesbury by-law officers and the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) detachment recently collaborated to dismantle a door-to-door fraud network primarily targeting the elderly. This criminal network lured Hawkesbury victims into undertaking driveway paving services using high-pressure sales tactics. This was a scam that would have led to financial losses amounting to thousands of dollars for Hawkesbury residents.

A Widespread Phenomenon Across Ontario

Unfortunately, this type of fraud is not unique to Hawkesbury. Similar incidents have been reported in several other regions of Ontario. Fraudsters, often posing as contractors or representatives of presumably reputable companies, use aggressive and deceptive sales tactics, mainly targeting vulnerable individuals, such as seniors.

A Reminder of Provincial Legislation

It is important to note that in Ontario, door-to-door solicitation has been banned since 2018, with very limited exceptions. This legislation was introduced to protect the public from aggressive and dishonest commercial practices. Under this law, no contractor or business has the right to approach a homeowner unless the homeowner has directly contacted them to request their services.

Tips for Protecting Yourself Against Fraud

Authorities recommend that everyone remain vigilant against this type of fraud. Here are some tips to avoid becoming a victim:

1. **Don't answer the door** if you are not expecting someone or don't recognize the person.
2. **Request proof of business permit issued by the Town of Hawkesbury.** Requesting proof is your right. No one can contest this request.
3. **Never share personal**, financial information, or copies of bills with strangers.
4. **Don't make any impulsive decisions**, and don't be swayed by pressure tactics.
5. **Inform your loved ones**, especially elderly relatives, about the dangers of such solicitation.
6. **Install a security camera** around your home, especially near your front door.
7. **Subscribe to credit monitoring** services to be alerted of any fraudulent activities.
8. **Take the time to do your research.** If a company is legitimate, you will find information about it online or in business directories.

Authorities' Vigilance: A Model to Follow

The effective collaboration between the OPP and municipal by-law officers in this case highlights the importance of law enforcement bodies' vigilance against criminals exploiting the vulnerable. This operation is a victory for public safety and serves as a reminder that authorities are here to protect and support citizens.

Hawkesbury residents and those in surrounding areas are encouraged to stay alert and report any suspicious activity to law enforcement. Remember, prevention is the best protection.

To report a crime or get more information, visit: Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS) or the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre at 1-888-495-8501.

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