



FRAUD TIP OF THE WEEK
Home Repair Scams
The Traveling Contractor
By Detective Paul Henninger
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Last week, we had our first of many windstorms in the Northwest. At a meeting, I was reminded of a type of criminal who “blows in with the wind”. **Beware of the Traveling Contractor!**

There are many types of roofing scams. I am going to discuss one possible scenario.

This fraudster is normally from out of town, following the wind. They will unexpectedly knock on your door, offering a “free” roof inspection. They will claim to be a licensed contractor, when they are not. While on your roof, they may find some minor damage, or cause additional damage. They will provide you with an inflated estimate to fix the damage, yet offer to “fix it for less”. They may ask for a cash advance, to can buy materials. If they return, they will make sub-standard repairs, if any. You will end up with a hole in your wallet, and the roof. Since they are not a licensed Oregon contractor, you will never see them or your money again.

TIPS:

- ❑ **Contractors operating in Oregon are required to be Licensed, Bonded and Insured. They must be registered with the Oregon Construction Contractors Board.**
 - Oregon Construction Contractors Board Mission Statement: “The Construction Contractors Board protects the public’s interest relating to improvements to real property. The Board regulates construction contractors and promotes a competitive business environment through education, contractor licensing, dispute resolution, and law enforcement.”

- ❑ **Before using any contractor, contact the Oregon Construction Contractors Board.**
 - They will be able to tell you if the contractor is licensed, bonded and insured.
 - They will tell you if any complaints have been filed against the contractor.
 - They investigate unlicensed contractors.
 - They investigate consumer complaints against contractors.
 - Website www.oregon.gov/CCB/
 - Email Address ccb.info@state.or.us
 - Phone 503-378-4621 (Salem)
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- ❑ **Most licensed contractors are honest and hardworking. But some are not.**
 - Have a written contract. Read the contract before you sign it.
 - Be wary of deposits or paying for materials in advance.
 - Do not leave a contractor alone during an inspection, or during repairs.
 - If you are able, inspect the repairs prior to making any payment.

- ❑ **Beware of Traveling Contractors, even if they are licensed. If things go bad, it may be difficult to locate and contact them.**
 - **Do not let a stranger in your home, or on your roof. Get their information, check them out with the contractor's board, and then invite them back to do an inspection if they are a licensed contractor without complaints.**
 - **If they try to pressure you into making an immediate inspection by stating "I can only offer you a deal today"; do not use them!**



For additional Fraud Tips visit the Salem Police Department's website address at www.cityofsalem.net/departments/police.