



Alert about home security alarm companies

Cambridgeshire County Council's Trading Standards Service and Cambridgeshire Police have been receiving reports from concerned residents who have been called out of the blue by security companies offering them an alarm system for their home. In some cases the sales person has refused to give company details, or have given a telephone number which is just an answerphone. Claims made by the salesmen suggest they are connected to the Police Service which is untrue.

It starts with an initial telephone call offering an alarm system at a reduced price, £1 or even for free. A salesman will then visit, pressuring the homeowner to sign up straight away, in order to get a good deal. Initial costs outlined are misleading - when yearly maintenance and monitoring costs are included the cost is substantially higher. The maintenance contract may be for up to 10 years, with the cost running into the many thousands. In addition salesmen have been known to remain in a person's home for many hours in order to persuade the customer to agree to the contract.

Advice for residents

Whatever work you want done on your home, we recommend you always obtain 3 quotes to make sure the price is reasonable.

If during a visit to your property a trader refuses to leave, contact the police immediately and make a note of the time of the request and the time the trader leaves. This applies to any trader – not just alarm companies.

When buying an alarm system we would suggest you look for companies that are accredited by N.S.I. (National Security Inspectorate) or S.S.I.A.B. (Security Systems & Alarm Inspection Board). Independent Inspectorates are not-for profit approval bodies who carry out inspection services for the security industry in order to protect customer interests. They are governed by UKAS (United Kingdom Accreditation Service) the sole accreditation service recognised by the government.

Free home security advice is available from Cambridgeshire Police on the number below.

If during a visit to your home you purchase goods or services from a trader and then you have second thoughts you usually have a right to cancel for contracts of more than £35. The paperwork that a trader leaves will give the

details on how to cancel, and will include a cancellation form. You have 7 days in which you can cancel.

If you have been contacted by a security company and feel concerned please contact the Police or Cambridgeshire Trading Standards for assistance.

Cambridgeshire Police: 0345 456 456 4 (in case of emergency dial 999).

Trading Standards: 08454 04 05 06. This is our partner organisation Consumer Direct who will be able to advise you and pass information through to us.