



From mountain to sea

Trading Standards Bulletin

Bulletin No. 50

Doorstep Crime/ Cold Calling

Nothing to report

Scams etc.

A resident in the Formartine area contacted a tradesman several months ago to undertake some work on his roof and paid him a four figure sum up-front to cover the costs. A number of reasons were given but, to date, the work has not even started and the tradesman has stopped responding to phone calls and e-mails, so the resident reported the matter to Trading Standards.

When the work was agreed by both parties and money changed hands, the resident and trader had formed a contract. Each contract has its own terms and conditions and these usually include the details of the goods and services to be provided (according to the work needing to be done) and the approximate timescales for this work to be completed.

If you, as a consumer, feel that a trader is taking too long to provide these goods and services, or the trader has exceeded the agreed timescale, you can send the trader a formal letter setting a new, reasonable timescale to complete the work. This is called 'making time of the essence'. If the trader then fails to meet this new deadline, the consumer could hold the trader in breach of contract. Doing so may allow the consumer to claim for a full refund in the form of damages from the trader via the Simple Procedure (which was previously called the Small Claims Court). The consumer may also be able to claim from the trader any additional costs which they've incurred as a result of this breach.

Some points to remember though:

- Always ensure that you obtain a proper written quote from a tradesman. Ideally, this should be on headed paper, dated and signed and describing what work is to be done. Scribbled notes do not count. Keep the quote safe as this could become evidence in the event of a dispute and claim
- Keep proof of any payments to the trader in the form of receipts, bank statements or in the case of direct bank payments, screen grabs of the transaction, for the same reasons as above



From mountain to sea

- Send the formal letter by recorded delivery and keep a copy in your file, so that you have proof of what was requested in the letter, dates set and proof of delivery of the letter when it's signed for by the recipient
- Keep any responses, written or verbal (voice mails) and notes of when these were received (this can be done in the form of a diary)
- Please also see Bulletins 28, 37 and 46 for previous advice about the Simple Procedure
- Seek advice from Trading Standards if unsure. Contact details are below.

Misc.

Suspected new cases of Avian Influenza in Aberdeenshire

While we appreciate that the summer holidays have just begun and thoughts will turn to heading for our fantastic beaches, we must advise of a number of suspected new cases of Avian Influenza which have sadly claimed a significant number of seabirds in recent days.

Please be assured that while our beaches remain safe and the threat of transmission to humans is very low, it is still important that you follow this safety advice:

- **Do not pick up or touch dead or sick wild birds**
- **Keep pets/dogs away from any dead or sick birds**
- **Don't feed wild waterfowl**
- **Don't touch wild bird feathers or surfaces contaminated with droppings**

Working alongside partner agencies, Aberdeenshire Council will be installing warning signs at known locations where Avian Influenza has been reported and teams will be monitoring these areas.

But with limited resources and a lengthy coastline, we do appreciate your help in identifying potential cases.

We would urge anyone visiting Aberdeenshire's beaches and wider coastline to remain vigilant and report any dead birds to Defra's national helpline on 03459 335577.

We will be aiming to have any reported cases of deceased birds removed as quickly as possible and fully trained staff from Landscape Services will prioritise removal of birds from areas of high footfall where there is safe access.

From mountain to sea

If you come across a grouping of 10 or more dead birds please also call our own dedicated phonenumber on 01467 537444.

If you find a live but sick bird call the SSPCA on 03000 999999.

If you keep poultry or other birds, it is vital that you wash your hands and clean and disinfect your footwear before tending to your birds.

For more details on avian influenza, visit www.gov.scot/publications/avian-influenza-bird-flu/

Scam Calls

The following information has been circulated on behalf of Trading Standards Scotland.

Ofcom research published in October 2021 highlighted that more people are now receiving scam calls on their mobile phones compared to landlines with 43% of mobile users having received a suspicious call on their phones in the last 3 months.

TrueCall technology previously used on landlines has been developed and is now available for mobile phones through a SIM card. The SIM, in trials, has shown the same high levels of protection and disruption as the landline blocker with over 95% of unwanted calls being blocked.

To see how this works in practice, TrueCall videos are available to view at www.mobilesafe.co.uk

Currently, in a project funded by the Scottish Government, Trading Standards Scotland can offer the above service free of charge to consumers who are at risk of being scammed on their mobile telephone. As well as receiving trueCall protection users get 2 years unlimited calls, unlimited text messages and 2GB per month fully funded and of course users keep their existing number.

To apply and for further explanation as to referral process please read the attached information paper (Mobile Safe User overview – also available on the Aberdeenshire Council website where the bulletins are saved. See below for details). Please also see also the link above.







From mountain to sea

#ReportThePhish

Received a
suspicious email?

If you have received an email which you're not quite sure about, forward it to:
report@phishing.gov.uk

 POLICE SCOTLAND  NPCC  Cyber Aware  TO STOP PHISH

With thanks to Gordon MacDonald, Police Scotland Cybercrime Unit (Gordy.MacDonald@scotland.police.uk) for the above slide.

Conclusion

Please note that the advice given in these bulletins has been deliberately kept simple, so that if you are faced with a scenario such as the ones discussed here where fear, panic and alarm are often tools used deliberately by scammers, you will know what to do at that time. Remember, after the initial panic is over, you may have rights which Trading Standards can help you with. We can also help you with advice about any article mentioned in these bulletins.

If you have been the victim of a Doorstep Crime or an attempted crime, whether Bogus Caller or Rogue Trader, please report the matter to Consumer Advice



From mountain to sea

Scotland so that Trading Standards can build a detailed, ongoing picture of the activities of these scammers throughout the Shire. This would be a great help to us to tackle this sort of crime.

If you have any information to share about the unlawful sale of tobacco or disposable vapes, please use the Contact Info below to pass that information to Trading Standards. If you would prefer, you can report the information anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Contact Info

For urgent Trading Standards matters, contact Aberdeenshire Council's Trading Standards at 01467 537222. For non-urgent enquiries, please contact Consumer Advice Scotland at <https://www.consumeradvice.scot/> or on 0808 164 6000.

Contact Police Scotland on 999 if you need urgent Police assistance or 101 for non-urgent matters.

For more information about scams please visit Friends Against Scams at <https://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/> or Take Five at <https://takefive-stopfraud.org.uk/>

Please direct any media queries to news@aberdeenshire.gov.uk or 01467 538222 during office hours.

All previous Trading Standards bulletins can be found at:
<http://publications.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/dataset/trading-standards-crime-and-scams-bulletin>