# Special Edition - Consumer Alerts

# January 2014

## Bogus Roofers

Bogus roofers can be a particular problem in the winter months and unfortunately this year is already proving to be no exception.

Trading Standards are warning residents of traders who cold call offering to do roofing repairs. Sometimes the trader tries to make his business look reputable by saying he is working elsewhere on the street and has noticed that work needs doing to your roof. This can lead to several residents on the same street being ripped-off. Another trick is to pose as a surveyor or someone from the council with a fake ID card.

Sadly, some bogus roofers deliberately target people who have already been victims. The victim will have recently had some roofing work done that was either never finished or of very poor quality. Another bogus roofer then cold calls saying they have heard/noticed they've had a poor job done and offer to put it right. In a recent case, one vulnerable resident was found to have paid approximately £70,000 over the last couple of years to various bogus roofers.

Bogus roofers usually say they have noticed minor problems with the roof e.g. loose slates or ridge tiles. They get the consumer to agree to the work then later find that more work needs to be done. A problem of few loose tiles often ends up as a complete re-roof. The price usually starts at a couple of hundred pounds but can increase to £5,000 - £10,000 or more as the trader finds more work that needs doing.

Bogus roofers often do not give any paperwork but this is not always the case. Some can appear quite professional.

Any work that is done is usually of very poor quality and often unnecessary. The traders usually ask for money up front and often demand to be paid in cash but it has been known for cheques to be accepted. Consumers are often harassed for payment and in a recent case two older ladies were driven to the bank to withdraw £1,000s in cash.

## Don't become a victim

* Do not deal with traders who cold call
* If the trader says they are working locally –check with your neighbour that the work has been completed satisfactorily
* For larger jobs always get three written quotes from different traders – it’s a way to check what work needs doing and that you're getting a good price
* Don't be pressured into having work done straight away – give yourself time to think it over
* If the trader finds additional work that needs doing get quotes for that too.
* Don't pay cash for work carried out and try to avoid paying any money up front
* If you need a reputable trader why not look at our Safe Trader Scheme. For more information visit [www.safetrader.org.uk](http://www.safetrader.org.uk) or call Help Direct on 0303 333 1111.

**Contact the Trading Standards Service via the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 08454 04 05 06**