

Protection from Con Artists

Sheriff Fontoura Recommends Ways to Protect Yourself from Con Artists

- It's not always easy to spot con artists. They are smart, aggressive and persuasive. Con artists invade our homes through the telephone, the Internet and the mail. Many con artists are bold enough to advertise in well-known newspapers and some even come to your door.
- Never give a caller your credit card, phone card, social security or bank account number over the phone. It is ILLEGAL for telemarketers to ask for these numbers to verify a prize or gift.
- Beware of 900 numbers. Telephone calls to many of these numbers result in a charge of \$50.00 or more.
- Listen carefully to the name of the charity asking you for money. Fraudulent charities often use names that sound like reputable, well-known organizations. Always ask for a financial report BEFORE you donate. A reputable charity will always provide one.
- Be suspicious of health care products that promise a quick and dramatic cure. Quackery can delay an ill person from getting proven medical treatment.
- Also be suspicious of ads that promise quick cash for working at home. After you've paid for the supplies or a book on how to get started, you often find there is no market for the product and no way to get your money back.
- Beware of home repair offers at an extremely low price. Con artists who make these offers may just do part of the work, use shoddy materials and untrained workers, or simply take your money and never return.
- Use common sense in dealing with auto repairs. Get a written estimate of the work to be done to your car, read the estimate carefully and NEVER give the mechanic a blank check to "fix everything";

REMEMBER: IF AN OFFER SOUNDS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE, IT PROBABLY IS!