



# NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE  
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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## **Police encourage residents to protect themselves against scams**

*Offer tips to avoid home improvement, landscaping and similar scams this spring*

The Howard County Police Department is encouraging residents to protect themselves against potential solicitation scams, such as home improvement and tree trimming, as they carry out seasonal maintenance on their homes this spring.

Police are asking citizens to share this message with family members, friends or neighbors who may be vulnerable to scams.

Residents should be suspicious of unsolicited door-to-door offers that require payment up front. Scammers may set a price and require immediate payment, but often will not follow through on services as promised. They may return and request additional compensation and will often fail to provide a contract.

Citizens should also be wary of anyone who begins performing yard or home improvement services without their consent and then demands payment.

While some reputable companies do offer their services door-to-door, they are required to possess a Howard County peddler and solicitor card. Residents should request to see this ID in addition to a company ID.

Along with the Howard County Office of Consumer Affairs, HCPD encourages residents to consider the following tips:

- Be wary of unsolicited offers or services you didn't seek out.
- Verify contractor or tree services licenses with the Maryland Home Improvement Commission or the Maryland Department of Natural Resources before making any agreement.
- Don't feel pressured to make a decision on the spot.
- If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

The department reminds residents to never allow anyone they don't know inside their home. If you notice a suspicious person or vehicle in your neighborhood or if you believe you may have been the victim of a scam, call police at (410) 313-2200. If a crime is in progress, call 911.

To get more information on current scams, visit [www.howardcountymd.gov/consumer](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/consumer).

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