

## Advice On Dealing With Bogus Callers - 04.06.19

There have recently been several burglaries where the older generation have been targeted and given access to their homes to men posing as officials. Doorstep callers come in various forms. The difficulty at the door is knowing whether or not they are genuine.

Always report bogus callers to the police.

Always put the chain on before you open the door, or use a door viewer.

Bogus 'officials' may claim to be from gas/water/electricity board, health authority or other organisations but all 'officials' have a company identity card. Ask to see it and take hold of it to read it. Keep asking questions until you are absolutely sure they are who they say they are. If they are genuine they will have no objections to this. If you are in any doubt call their head office, but close the door first and do not call a number they give to you, look it up in a telephone directory.

Keep your account numbers for services such as gas, water, electric, BT etc so that you can ask the caller what your account number is to ensure they are genuine. Some companies operate a password scheme and some have Braille on their ID cards. If you are still in doubt, do not let them in, but call the police.

Bogus 'workmen', like tree loppers, tarmacers etc will sometimes offer to carry out work at a low price but when it is completed the price increases. Often they will ask for money in advance, they may even offer to drive you to the bank or building society to withdraw money to pay them. They could then simply disappear or do a poor job very expensively. If you need any building work done, get three written quotes from reputable firms, and then decide which one is the best.

Bogus 'dealers' may offer to buy antiques, furniture or jewellery at what seems to be a good price. Chances are they are trying to trick you into selling something for a lot less than it is worth. If you want to sell something choose one or two genuine dealers to value the item or ask a friend or relative for advice. Ask them for ID and a calling card.

If callers become intimidating, ask a neighbour for help or call the police. You are quite entitled to say NO and ask them to leave.

Crime prevention tips:

If you're not sure who is at your door, don't open it. Check the identity of the caller by calling the company they are purporting to be from i.e. Police, Council or Gas, Electricity, Water companies. Use the telephone numbers listed in your local directory or provided independently by your service provider. Do not use any telephone numbers provided by the caller, as they may be bogus.

Many utility service providers like gas, electricity and water, provide password schemes for customers, sign up to these. When unannounced callers claiming to be from these utility providers call at your door they should know the password if they are genuine.

'Water Boards' no longer exist, it is an obsolete phrase used only by bogus callers.

Don't keep large quantities of cash at home, put it in the bank where it is safe.  
Keep doors locked and windows secure at all times.

Ensure that if you do let somebody in to your home, that you close the door behind them - distraction burglars often work in teams, where one will distract you whilst others sneak in through the insecure door.

If somebody asks for your help (ie needs to make a telephone call, lost a ball in your garden, needs a drink or pen and paper) refer them to a trusted neighbour or assist them through a closed door or call a friend or neighbour to come and help.

If you suspect a bogus caller is at your door call the police immediately.

### **Help Us Keep Sussex Safe**

Seen something suspicious or have information about a crime or incident? Please contact us at <http://www.sussex.police.uk/contact-us/>, email us at [101@sussex.pnn.police.uk](mailto:101@sussex.pnn.police.uk) or call 101.

Alternatively you can contact the independent charity **Crimestoppers**, anonymously, on 0800 555 111, or online at [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)