

Things to Look for Regarding Scam Artists/Transients

- Scam Artists/Transients are people that roam the country, staying in locations for only a short period of time.
- To make money, they will typically convince people to hire them to do cheap jobs around their home. (E.g. Roofing, paving, and fortune telling)
- Generally, they are active during the spring and summer months in the northeast including New Jersey.
- If you or anyone you know has fallen victim to a scam artist or transient scam, **contact your state or local police.**

Transients:

- Approximately between 10,000 and 45,000 live in the United States.
- Most of the population lives in Murphy Village, South Carolina, but they have other communities in the Fort Worth, Texas area as well as Tennessee, Georgia, New York, and New Jersey.
- Transients prefer country/rural areas.
- They are known to speak English, Cant, Shelta, or Gammon.
- Transients are known to dislike the police.
- They prefer weather ideal conditions.
- Will have no facial hair and are known to give themselves tattoos.
- Are more ruthless and more prone to violence than other scam artists.
- Most likely to "own" a paving or roofing company.
- Will commit other crimes such as shoplifting, burglary, and insurance fraud.

How to avoid being scammed by a Scam Artist/Transient:

Avoid anyone who:

- Knocks on your door unsolicited.
- Asks for you to pay for a job upfront.
- Is not visible online or has no physical address, only a Post Office Box.
- Offers you a discount to help them find other customers.
- Asks you to get your building permits.
- Gives you a "too good to be true" price.
- Pressures you to act immediately to get a huge discount.
- Tells you to sign without reading the contract or sign a blank page(s).
- Offers you a great deal because they have left over material from another job they did.
- Talks so fast, as to confuse you and then says he already explained the issue.
- Demands to come into your home to talk (Preface to Theft or Burglary)
- *****DO NOT LET THEM INTO YOUR HOUSE*****

Indicators of a paving scam.

- Refusing to provide references and recommendations

- Claiming to have left over asphalt - most professional pavers know how much material will be needed to complete a job, so having enough extra asphalt at the end to complete another project is extremely uncommon.
- Reputable contractors will provide you with an initial estimate and you will have weeks-months to consider. Scammers will pressure you into making a quick decision.
- Always request an official contract to be drawn up before providing payment.
- If a contract is received, lookout for ones that "guarantee" the work except for "vegetation growth", "reflective cracking", or states to not use "power steering" on the surface.
- Most reliable contractors will allow several payment methods, scammers will only accept cash and in most cases upfront
- If the quoted price is very low, odds are the quality of work will be low as well.
- Unmarked trucks- if the "businesses" truck is unmarked, they have an out of town or "1-800" phone number, no DOT number, or their business address is far from town, they are most likely not a legitimate company.
- A truck pulling a 2 or 3 axle trailer that holds what would appear to be enough paving equipment to complete a paving job (roller, skid steer, and paver or spreader) all on one trailer.
- The trucks are typically spotless with shiny chrome wheels on both the truck and trailer.
- The trucks and trailers have an out of state license plate or a combination of different plates.
- The truck may have some generic sounding company names such as "Pave-all", "Laymor Paving", and "Best Value Paving".
- Look for fuel receipts from out of state and/or receipts from a hotel/motel. This is an indicator that they are from the surrounding area.
- Any material that has absolutely no use in asphalt paving such as rubber roofing cement.
- Passengers or laborers from different states or ones that were just picked-up to do some work.
- A majority of the time the drivers will not have a CDL (Commercial Driver's License).

Other cons and scams to look out for:

Shoplifting:

- Will target retail stores for high dollar items.
- Will use distraction thefts when stealing jewelry from stores.
- Will generally steal electronics such as laptops and TVs.

Till Tapping:

- Till tapping occurs when one reaches into a cash register and steals money from it.
- An accomplice will cause a distraction, distracting the cashier. While the cashier is distracted, the thief will reach into the register and steal a handful of money.

Scrap Metal Theft:

- Scam artists will make approximately between 1 and 1.5 billion dollars annually from scrap metal theft.

- Most common scrap metal that is stolen is copper.
- They will work in "crews" of 3 or 4 members. The fourth member is usually not seen because they are usually waiting in a vehicle waiting.
- They will approach metal employees acting as Native Americans.
- They may give the metal employee a letter from an American Indian Heritage Foundation.
- Will generally give a sympathy talk to the metal employee in order to receive scrap metal.
- Once the scrap metal is received, they will sell it in order to make money.

Residential Burglary:

- A home burglary conducted by scam artists/transients are generally performed with a 4-person crew.
- They will generally use a distraction technique such as posing as a utility worker or people in distress, while the other(s) sneak into the home and burglarize it.
- They will have a pre-arranged time and location for pickup.
- They will generally use rental vehicles for transportation.
- They generally only take jewelry, cash, and electronics.

Signs your house could be targeted by burglars:

- You notice a new vehicle on your street.
- You see strangers walking past your house on your street.
- Random stranger or uncertified workmen knock on your door.
- You are visited by unsolicited fundraisers or religious workers.
- You see someone take pictures of your home and walk away.

Fortune Telling:

- One of the most popular occupations for scam artists and transients.
- A majority of fortune tellers are scam artists or transients.
- Some of the popular methods of fortune telling are tarot cards, tea leaves, palmistry, horoscope reading, E.S.P. or psychic, and crystal gazing.
- The scammers will advertise in heavy traffic areas of a town or city and give an initial reading for a cheap price.
- The fortune teller will then inform the victim that they are "cursed" and "need additional work" to "cleanse" themselves.
- If the victim agrees, the price of the next visit then jumps drastically.

Roofing Scams:

- Roofing scams will generally happen after a storm has come through an area.
- They will go door to door acting as a contractor that have spotted damage on your roof while they were passing by.
- Will target older residents due to their lack of ability to climb a ladder and inspect their roof themselves.
- Will offer a free "inspection" of your roof to look for any damage that may have occurred due to the storm.
- Scammers will show fake pictures of a damaged roof, exaggerate existing damage, or cause damage to a homeowner's roof in order to convince them that their roof needs to be repaired.

- They will sometimes provide a contract where the "roofing company" can negotiate with the home owner's insurance company. By signing these, the homeowner waives their rights to make any decisions regarding the repairs.
- Scammers are unable to provide any recent or local references from prior jobs.
- They will ask for a large down payment upfront, either in cash or with a check. Reputable roofers will either begin working or drop off supplies before requesting any money.

Things to do to avoid roofing scams:

- Look for well-established, licensed, insured, and bonded roofing professionals on your own time. Do not hire anyone who comes to your door.
- Ask for the contractor's license number and confirm that number is valid with your city or county building department.
- Require references from homes in your neighborhood or surrounding areas.
- Make sure you understand all the documents that are being sent to your insurance carrier.
- Never pay the contractor upfront or sign a completion certificate before the work is completed.
- Don't be pushed into signing a contract right away. Look through the contract and ask about any information you are unsure about.
- ****DO NOT LET THEM INTO YOUR HOUSE****
- ****MAKE SURE YOUR WINDOWS AND BACK DOOR ARE LOCKED****