



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
City of Duluth Police Department

411 West First Street, Duluth, Minnesota 55802
218-730-5400 | www.duluthmn.gov | Gordon Ramsay, Chief of Police

For more information contact Jim Hansen, Public Information Officer 218-390-2232



DATE: 06/26/2012
NATURE OF INCIDENT: Duluth Police Warn Public About Scams
CASE NO.:
INCIDENT DATE :06/26/2012
INCIDENT TIME:
INCIDENT LOCATION: Duluth, MN
SUBJECT: Duluth Police Warn Public About Scams
BY: DPD Public Information Officer Jim Hansen (218) 390-2232

The recovery mode from the recent flood disaster is now in full swing. Unfortunately, natural disasters such as this are the cue for con artists and drifters to move in hoping for desperate people to let their guard down.

There have been no scam related complaints yet, but in the interest of being proactive in preventing our citizens from being victimized by scam artists and unscrupulous contractors, the Duluth Police Department is making the public aware of the potential for fraud and some methods to avoid being victimized.

Almost all scams begin with an unsolicited visit from someone purporting to be a contractor. For this reason, a good practice is to reject it if you did not request it.

Be suspicious if a contractor:

- Provides a hasty quote on a big job or a lowball offer
- Demands cash, full payment, or a high up-front percentage
- Has no physical address or identification
- Uses pressure tactics and limited-time offers
- Offers you under-the-table deals such as a discount for cash
- Refuses to provide a written contract or a written guarantee

Good practices to avoid being scammed:

- Obtain the contractor's business name and contractor license number
- Ask for references
- Get a written contract which contains all the contractor's contact information, details of all the work to be done, and any guarantees
- Do not make a large up-front deposit
- Whenever possible, get a referral or use local contractors
- Verify your contractor's license at the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry: <https://secure.doli.state.mn.us/lookup/licensing.aspx>
- Research your contractor at the Better Business Bureau (BBB): <http://minnesota.bbb.org/find-business-reviews/>

Additionally, many legitimate persons such as insurance agents, FEMA personnel, local

inspectors and real contractors may have to visit your storm-damaged property. However, you may also encounter people posing as inspectors, government officials or contractors in a bid to obtain personal information or collect payment for repair work. Your best strategy to protect yourself against fraud is to ask to see identification in all cases and to safeguard your personal financial information. Local, state and federal employees do not solicit or accept money for public services.