

## “Travelers”

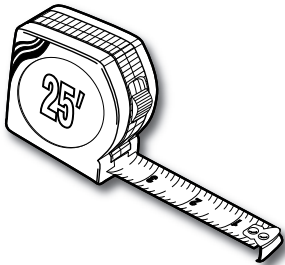
This brochure is intended to increase the public's awareness and knowledge of home repair and service scams. Millions of dollars are lost each year to swindlers posing as home repair and service workers. Most of these swindlers are members of an organized crime group within a closed society known as “Travelers.”



“Travelers” are traveling criminals who move around the country, staying in one place just long enough to swindle citizens with phony repair and/or service schemes. These traveling criminals usually prey on senior citizens because they are more vulnerable.

## Common Home Repair and Service Scams

- ▶ Asphalt Driveway Paving
- ▶ Lightning Rod Installation or Repair
- ▶ House or Barn Painting
- ▶ Driveway or Roof Sealing
- ▶ Roof Repair
- ▶ Power Washing
- ▶ Extermination
- ▶ Tree Trimming



## Overview of a Typical Traveler Scam

- ▶ Seeks out residential neighborhoods predominantly occupied by senior citizens
- ▶ Makes an unsolicited approach for work or repairs
- ▶ Claims to have completed a job in the area and has leftover materials
- ▶ Quotes a bargain price
- ▶ Presents a vague business contract or none at all
- ▶ Uses two-way radios to contact crew and equipment
- ▶ Completes work usually within 30 minutes
- ▶ Presents homeowner with a much higher bill than originally quoted
- ▶ Explains that the quoted bargain price did not include labor or that more materials were required than expected
- ▶ Uses intimidation or threats to receive increased payment
- ▶ Immediately takes personal checks to the bank to have them cashed
- ▶ Magnetic door signs on work vehicles that can be removed or replaced
- ▶ Completed job will be of poor quality
- ▶ Paving jobs will start to crack open and vegetation may grow through the cracks
- ▶ The first rain may cause asphalt to crumble and wash away
- ▶ May return over and over again every year to solicit repairs

## What To Do If Approached

If you suspect that you have been a victim of this type of crime or that you have been approached by someone soliciting this type of scam:

- ▶ Contact your local law enforcement agency.
- ▶ Write down names and descriptions of the individuals.
- ▶ Write down vehicle license plate numbers and vehicle descriptions.
- ▶ Tell your neighbors and family of the incident.

## Don't be a Victim!

You can protect yourself by following a few simple practices:

- ▶ Do not accept unsolicited business proposals.
- ▶ Ask for references and phone numbers.
- ▶ Contact your local Better Business Bureau for prior complaints.
- ▶ Contact the Attorney General's Office for prior complaints.
- ▶ Never disclose how much money you have at home or in the bank.

**ALTHOUGH MOST HOME REPAIR SERVICES ARE LEGITIMATE, A SMALL MINORITY OF PEOPLE USE HOME REPAIR SWINDLES TO TAKE YOUR MONEY.**

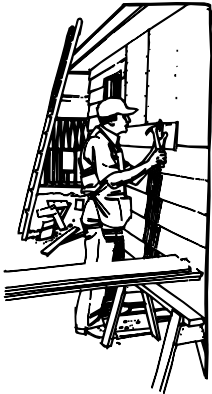
## Remember

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

### Are you a Victim?

- ▶ If you realize that you are being scammed—and you have been threatened, intimidated, or forced to write a check—immediately contact your bank and stop payment on the check.
- ▶ If you are forced to go to your bank to obtain money, tell a bank employee.

### Don't be embarrassed!



- ▶ Immediately call your local law enforcement agency and file a report. Your report of the crime could help prevent another person from being victimized.

“TRAVELERS” COUNT ON YOUR FEAR TO HELP THEM GO UNDETECTED. THIS IS NOT JUST A CIVIL MATTER —

### It's Criminal!

## Helpful Number

Texas Attorney General's Office  
Consumer Protection Hotline  
(800) 621-0508



## Helpful Websites

[www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org)

[www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org)

[www.oag.state.tx.us](http://www.oag.state.tx.us)

[www.consumerlaw.org](http://www.consumerlaw.org)

[www.worldwidescam.com](http://www.worldwidescam.com)

# HOME REPAIR & SERVICE SCAMS

A collection of tools including a paintbrush, a hammer, and a screwdriver, arranged around the text.

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