



## ALBUQUERQUE POLICE DEPARTMENT CRIME PREVENTION UNIT



### DOOR-TO-DOOR SOLICITATION

Illegal or unauthorized door-to-door solicitation presents a possible unsafe situation in the residential setting. Individuals who represent themselves as a legitimate business are often times conducting fraudulent or potentially criminal activity. This type of enterprise is less prevalent today so individual citizens should consider any unexpected knock at the door to be potentially suspicious. The following are suggestions about how to create and maintain a safe and secure residential environment and how to handle the unwanted or unauthorized solicitor.

- The average citizen can define and describe normal behavior and activity in their immediate area or block. Citizens should apply this knowledge to persons walking the neighborhood. Strangers or those people that do not belong should be noticed and observed for suspicious activity. If a person's behavior is deemed to be abnormal or suspicious, the citizen should call the non-emergency number 242-COPS. If someone witnesses a crime in progress, dial 911.
- If the resident receives any knock at the door, they should **ALWAYS** observe the area through a window or eye-viewer prior to opening the door – even if they are expecting a visitor. If an unfamiliar person is observed outside the residence, the occupant should be very cautious about opening the door. If there is a security screen door with a deadbolt lock in place and the citizen feels comfortable with opening the door, they should not engage the individual; rather politely ask them to leave. In the absence of a security screen door, they should notify the visitor they are unwelcome and ask them to leave the premises via the locked door and should never allow entry for any reason. Once the person is asked to leave, the resident should observe them leaving and be prepared to report suspicious activity to the police.
- It is important to note that a knock at the door should not go unanswered in some manner – whether through the security screen door or the main door. Criminals posing as a legitimate solicitor are looking for an empty house to eventually commit residential burglary. If the criminal breaks into an expected empty residence and finds an occupant, the probability of a violent encounter is high.
- Home Invasions can be the result of a door-to-door solicitor. The criminal knocks on the door and through a variety of techniques, persuades the resident to open the door. Once the door is open other individuals appear from obscured locations and force their way into the residence. If someone is at the door claiming to require assistance or some type of help, especially late at night, **NEVER OPEN THE DOOR** – call 911.
- Citizens who have experienced an illegal solicitor or suspicious person should alert other neighbors in the immediate area.
- It is recommended that no one engage or enter into a discussion about the purchase of items or services from any one who initiate contact with them. If items or services are needed, citizens should pursue the purchase through established businesses. **All frauds and scams originate from contact initiated by someone else.**
- How to verify a solicitor's legitimacy – **All legitimate businesses in the City of Albuquerque must have a permit to operate, this includes the door-to-door solicitor per City Ordinance 13-3-1-1.** *The Ordinance requires the individual to have on their person a permit that can be produced on request, which includes photo identification. Any solicitor that claims not to have one or has left it in another location should be considered illegitimate. If you desire the right of privacy, posting a No Trespassing or No Soliciting sign on your premises must be observed by the solicitor. Solicitation is permitted only between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and sunset.*