

NEWS FROM SCDCA

South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS WARNS MIDLANDS NEIGHBORHOODS ABOUT DOOR-TO-DOOR BOOK SCAM

Columbia, SC.....Despite the heat, scammers are still pounding the pavement looking for their next victim. The South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs (SCDCA) recently received a tip from a local resident about a scam that has crisscrossed the country and is now knocking on Midlands' doors...literally. The scam, which swept an Irmo neighborhood, is not likely to disappear immediately. Consumers should be suspicious about the following scenario and any other "sales pitches" like it.

A door-to-door salesman approaches a house and attempts to interest the resident in books (or other products) that he is selling. The sales pitch is convincing. The salesman describes efforts to raise funds to support a trip to England to play in a soccer tournament. Upon his return, the young man will begin training at Annapolis as a naval cadet. The sales pitch cleverly includes the names of neighbors nearby. The more pitches the salesman makes in the neighborhood, the more names he is able to collect. By the time he reaches your home he may refer to half a dozen of your closest neighbors, making his story sound legitimate.

Underneath the sophisticated details, order receipts, and "neighborly name dropping," the pitch and the sale are a scam. You pay for the books upfront, but never receive the goods. The

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Our mission is to protect consumers from inequities in the marketplace through advocacy, mediation, enforcement and education.

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salesman, who claimed to live in your neighborhood, suddenly disappears, but not before your check is cashed.

Consumers should be cautious about door-to-door sales. SCDCA recommends consumers collect education and promotional materials to review before purchasing a product or service. If the product or service will not be available immediately upon payment, consumers should not make the purchase without a reliable means to track the salesman and the order. Furthermore, consumers should always avoid upfront payments of the entire amount due when dealing with door-to-door products or services.

For more information, contact the Public Information Division at 803.734.4190, toll free in SC at 1.800.922.1594, or online at www.sconsumer.gov.

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