



Like many of you, I don't know what is worst. Is it squirrels raiding my bird feeders, chipmunks eating my flower bulbs, or the pesky door to door solicitors attempting to sell me something? For the squirrels and chipmunks, you can trap or ignore them. But what does one do with the biggest pest of all?

The United States Supreme Court ruled that the Constitution guarantees religious groups, politicians, Girl Scouts, charitable groups and others have the right to knock on their neighbors' doors, without stopping at town hall for permission. The Supreme Court ruled by a vote of 8-1 to strike down an Ohio village ordinance that required anyone going door to door to register with authorities and carry a permit..Who is protected under this ruling?

***An individual while and to the extent he/she is engaged in protected political speech or activity.**

***An individual while and to the extent he/she is engaged in protected religious speech or activity**

***An individual in the solicitation of funds and /or the sale of cookies candles, paper products, or similar sundries for and on behalf of a not- for -profit organization or associations.**

Transient Vendors who do not meet the above requirements must obtain a permit before they sell, offer for sale, or solicit for future delivery of goods must receive a permit from the police department.

Every year in Central Ohio, residents are victims of home improvement frauds. Driveway blacktopping and roof repair are the most common of these fraudulent schemes. Typically, the vendor will indicate they have blacktop left over from a "job down the road", and they say the company will blacktop your driveway for a reduced price. Another popular scam is the individual who "just happened to be driving down your street and noticed you have serious roof or gutter problems or trees that need to be trimmed". The work is almost always of inferior quality, unnecessary, and the victim is usually presented with a bill much higher than the original estimate. Victims, particularly the elderly, are often intimidated into paying this inflated bill. If you have an elderly neighbor or relative, be observant and help educate them about crimes of this nature as they often fall prey to these unethical and illegal operations.

Before you can legally stop solicitation at your home, the solicitors must be informed that they are doing something wrong. Posting signs that simply say 'No Solicitation' is usually sufficient but make sure notices aren't obscured by landscaping. Transient vendors and home solicitation sales are regulated by both state law and Perry Township.

The Police Department strongly recommends residents deal with established contractors with a verifiable local area business address. Caution is advised when dealing with contractors who engage in unsolicited, door to door sales. Anytime that you have a solicitor and you are uncomfortable, please call the Perry Police Department. We are available to assist you and help prevent unscrupulous solicitors from taking advantage of our valued residents.