



# San Dimas Sheriff's Station

## Neighborhood Watch News

### *HOMEOWNERS: DON'T BE A VICTIM OF HOME REPAIR RIPOFF SCAMS*

**We would like to alert homeowners to the following scams:**

**“Home Mortgage Scam”** Unscrupulous contractors may convince homeowners to refinance their mortgages to pay for remodeling. When the victim is unable to make the higher mortgage payment, a dishonest lending company working with the contractor seizes the owner’s home.

**“Hit and Run Artists”** Con artists travel from town to town looking for residents who are home alone during the day. These Travelers or “Hit and Run Artists” as they are known, will tell the homeowner that they have materials left over from a home repair job and offer to provide a discounted service with the “left over” materials. Travelers pressure the homeowner to make the decision immediately, to “take advantage” of the leftover materials. Once a deposit is made, the Traveler leaves town and never returns to complete the work.

We encourage homeowners to protect themselves by doing their home improvement homework. Start by following these tips whenever hiring a contractor:

- ▶ Get the contractor’s license number and contact the Contractor’s State

Board at (800) 321-2752 to determine if the license is valid, current and active.

- ▶ Be wary of door -to-door solicitations.
- ▶ Don’t be swayed by a solicitor’s high pressure scare tactics.
- ▶ Don’t hire the first contractor who comes along.
- ▶ Get at least three bids and check references.
- ▶ Insist on a written contract and review it with a friend or relative.
- ▶ Do not pay cash and make payments as the work is completed to your satisfaction.

Senior homeowners can receive free information about hiring and managing building contractors by ordering the Contractors State License Board’s free Senior Scam Stopper Kit, which contains the publications: “What Seniors Should Know Before Hiring a Contractor.” It can be ordered by calling (916) 255-3900.