

Homeowner's Peace of Mind

Human Services Spotlight Series #10

Seven Pinellas County consumers who needed windows in their homes either repaired or replaced found a local business advertising online offering professional residential glass contracting services. In each case, the representative from this business met these residents at their homes, prepared written proposals offering services and required the collection of deposits to order materials totaling over \$9,000 from February 2018 through July 2019.

However, at the time of these transactions none of the seven victims were aware that the person whom they gave these deposits to be an unlicensed contractor with a criminal history. After unsuccessful attempts to have the suspect return their deposits which included numerous unreturned phone calls, each consumer decided to file complaints with Pinellas County Consumer Protection seeking assistance.

The scope of work the contractor was contracting for would have required a contractor license which this business operator did not have. Most home improvement services often require contractor licensure to ensure those offering these type services are qualified and properly insured.

Pinellas County Consumer Protection works to conduct criminal investigations into unlicensed contractors and other types of cases who have scammed, defrauded, or harmed consumers in Pinellas County so that victims can be made whole and unlicensed contractors are held accountable for their illegal actions. These actions also prevent future victimization by these types of activities.

Due to the thorough criminal investigation conducted by Pinellas County Consumer Protection staff, multiple criminal charges were filed by the State Attorney's Office, and restitution was ultimately ordered in the amount each homeowner paid the contractor during December 2019. Additionally, the suspect in this case was sentenced to 5 years of probation and 104 days of time served in jail.

Protect
Regulate
Investigate
Educate

Sometimes it is hard to spot fraud when it is happening. Scams can be large or small, sophisticated or simple, but the people behind them have two things in common: They want to steal your money and avoid being caught. The reality is anyone could fall victim to a scam, no matter your age, intellect or economic status. Most consumer transactions are completed satisfactorily. On occasion, however, any consumer could experience unresolved problems such as defective products, erroneous bills or non-delivery of goods or services.

When you are confronted with such a situation, the dedicated employees of Pinellas County Consumer Protection are here to assist you. Investigators are available to speak with you regarding a consumer transaction at (727) 464-6200.

www.consumer@pinellascounty.org



Doing Things
for You!

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www.pinellascounty.org