

Residents cautioned about allowing 'workers' with no IDs in homes

Written by Marty Randall

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A recent incident at an elderly woman's home has caused Scottsburg Police Chief Delbert Meeks to issue a word of caution to residents.

Chief Meeks said that the woman reported to her family that two men came to her home on a recent evening and verbally identified themselves as Scottsburg Water Department workers. She said the men told her that they needed to check the pipes in her basement, and they requested that she come downstairs in the basement with them.

The lady allowed the men into her home but refused to go into the basement. She said they stayed a short while before coming back up from the basement, asking her to run her water for a period of time and then leaving. She later called a daughter and reported the incident. Nothing appears to be missing from the home.

"This lady is very, very lucky. First, residents should never let anyone into their homes without proper identification. Don't just take their word that they are who they say they are. Be cautious. If they work for the city, they will have IDs confirming their employment, and they should have a telephone number you can call to confirm who they are," said Chief Meeks. "Secondly, utility workers don't normally come to a house in the evening. If there's a problem, and they need to come inside a private residence, normal procedure is to make an appointment with the resident prior to the visit."

Anyone whose home or apartment is approached by a person unknown to them should be extremely careful about opening the door and allowing that person or persons access to their homes. "If they want to use the phone, get them a phone they can use outside. Don't let them in where they can get to you and perhaps cause you harm," suggested the police chief.

Once the person is inside, the resident becomes vulnerable and more likely to become a victim of a crime. Don't fall for a request for a drink of water or use of a bathroom. Direct such people to the nearest gas station or the like if such requests are made.

The recent spate of spring-like weather will likely result in visits by workmen who are not established businessmen in Scott County. "We always have a few reports of people being approached by someone wanting to do roof repair and the like. The fast and hard rule here should be don't let them inside. They can pitch their product or service to you while standing on your porch," he pointed out. "Make them give you a card and then if you're interested, you can call them back."

Above all, don't give a repairman money until the task is completed. Too many times in the past, workmen have been paid in full for work that is not finished or even started.

"We strongly suggest that people needing repairs done deal with businesses that are established and easily reached here in Scott County. Then, if you have a complaint about how the job was done, you know where to go to get in touch with whoever you hired," stated Chief Meeks.

Anyone wishing more information about this subject may call the Scottsburg Police Department at 752-4462 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday.