

Connecticut BBB warns against a summer scam going door-to-door nationwide

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Agency: **Connecticut Better Business Bureau Communications**



Trying to help a good cause could get you ripped off by fraudulent magazine salespeople

Wallingford, CT - May 8, 2009 – Better Business Bureau warns that deceptive door-to-door magazine sales crews are hitting the pavement in Connecticut, and looking to earn a quick buck this summer. In the last 12 months alone, BBB's across the nation received 1,100 complaints from consumers in 46 states against more than 50 companies that are selling magazines door-to-door. A number of these complaints were filed by Connecticut consumers.

Many of these companies employ crews of high school and college-age people who are trying to earn money over their summer break. These crews are sent to communities to knock on doors and sell magazines—sometimes without appropriate licensing. In the sales pitch, the representative might explain they are working to help raise money on behalf of a charity, for a school trip or even selling subscriptions to support troops in Iraq.

A Greater New Haven woman said a pair of students claiming they were from the University of Rhode Island, knocked on her door, said they lived “down the street,” and were selling magazines and books to “go to London.” Later, when she became suspicious, she called police, filed a report with Connecticut Better Business Bureau and put a stop on her check.

Connecticut Better Business Bureau President, Paulette Scarpetti, says victims readily believe the phony sales pitch and often pay hundreds of dollars by check. However, complaints allege the sales reps took the checks and the magazines never arrived.

“We are alerting consumers to this scam to prevent an epidemic of door-to-door magazine fraud. We encourage all Connecticut residents to be vigilant, and to inform their children, parents and grandparents about this type of operation.”

Scarpetti adds that consumers are not the only victims of this scam.

“The young salespeople also are being taken advantage of by their employers, forced to work long hours and having their wages withheld from them.”

BBB offers the following advice to avoid getting scammed by a door-to-door magazine sales scam:

- Always research the company with your Better Business Bureau at bbb.org before issuing a check for a magazine subscription.
- The Federal Trade Commission’s Three-Day Cooling-Off Rule gives the customer three days to cancel purchases over \$25 that are made in their home or at a location that is not the seller’s permanent place of business. Along with a receipt, salespeople should also include a completed cancellation form that customers can send to the company to cancel the agreement. By law, the company must give customers a refund within 10 days of receiving the cancellation notice.
- Victims of fraudulent magazine sales can file a complaint with their Better Business Bureau at bbb.org, local law enforcement, and the state Attorney General’s office.

Founded in 1928, Connecticut BBB is an unbiased non-profit organization that sets and upholds high standards for fair and honest business behavior. BBB offers objective advice and a wide range of education on topics affecting marketplace trust. BBB also offers complaint and dispute resolution support for consumers and businesses. Today, 128 BBBs serve communities across the U.S. and Canada, evaluating and monitoring more than three million local and national businesses and charities. For more advice on finding companies and businesses, start your search with trust at bbb.org.

Connecticut Better Business Bureau
94 South Turnpike Rd.
Wallingford, Ct 06492

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