**Doorstep selling**

**Doorstep crime is when rogue traders come to your door uninvited and pressure you into buying something or signing up for a service. They often try to sell their product or service in a way which can be very intimidating**

**What the law says**

**Doorstep selling is legal. If you buy anything on the doorstep or you allow the sale to take place in your home, your consumer rights are protected by law. The item you buy must be of satisfactory quality, fit for purpose and as described**

**14 day cooling off period**

**If you agree to buy something worth over £42 from a salesperson calling at your home, you have 14 days to cancel if you change your mind**

**The trader must give you a written notice of your cancellation rights when you agree the contract. If the trader doesn't provide you with this information, they commit a criminal offence**

**Paying by cash or credit**

**The 14 day cooling off period applies when you buy using cash or credit. If you buy through a credit sale or hire purchase agreement, you have the right to withdraw from the finance agreement within 14 days, without giving any reason**

**When you might not get a cooling-off period**

**You don’t automatically get a cooling-off period if**

**You have something specially made - for example, made to measure curtains, windows or a conservatory (some traders voluntarily offer a 7 day cooling-off period for these products, but they don’t have to)**

**You invite the business into your home for urgent repairs or maintenance - for example, when you ask a plumber to come and mend a burst pipe**

**Passenger transport services**

**Doorstep crime**

**Some examples of door step crime are, traders who:**

* **tell you guttering, roofing, gardening or paving work must be done to your home as it is in need of urgent repair – this may cause you to panic and allow the work to take place**
* **take your deposit and never return to do the work**
* **charge unreasonable prices or increase the price of the work as the job progresses**
* **don’t have cancellation policies or give cancellation notices, guarantees or warranties**
* **produce poor quality work and refuse to sort out problems or finish the work**

**Tips for dealing with doorstep selling**

**Not all doorstep sellers commit a crime. Stay protected and avoid doorstep selling scams by remembering these tips:**

* **don’t agree to anything just to get rid of a seller – you don’t have to buy anything you don’t want to**
* **check the seller’s ID card, make sure you have their full address, not just a PO Box or phone number - check the address exists and take note of the ID**
* **if you tell someone to leave your home, it’s a criminal offence if they don’t do as you ask**
* **even if a seller tells you your cancellation rights, remember that once you pay them they have the money and you don’t**
* **get a receipt for any purchases you make – remember any guarantee is worthless if a business disappears or ceases trading so be wary of relying on promises about the future**
* **don’t pay the full amount or a large deposit up front**
* **get and keep a copy of any paperwork, advert or flyer**

**Exceptions to the rules**

**Perishable foods such as food and drink**

**Financial services, such as banking, credit, insurance or personal pensions However, credit and insurance facilities will be affected if supplied with contracts for goods or services**

**Land and investment agreements**

**Gambling**

**Residential letting contracts, but estate agency contracts for their work in connection with the sale or letting of properties are covered**

**The supply of consumables by regular roundsmen such as your milkman or fishmonger**

**Package travel contracts**

**Timeshare and long-term holiday products, including resale and exchange contracts**

**Purchases from vending machines**

**Single telecom connections, such as payphones and internet café connections**

**Some contracts are regulated by other laws**

**I don’t want any doorstep sellers at my door**

**If don’t want anyone knocking on your door to sell you something you could stick a “No Cold Calling” sticker for your door**

**Under the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008, it may be a criminal offence for a trader to ignore your sign**

**If you think you have been scammed, contact your bank first**

**Report it to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or** [**www.actionfraud.police.uk**](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk) **to help stop it happening to others**

**Get advice and report it to Trading Standards through the Citizens Advice consumer service on 0808 223 1133 or online advice at** [**www.adviceguide.org.uk**](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk)

**The Citizens Advice consumer service provides free, confidential and impartial advice on consumer issues**

**It is important that all complaints are referred to the Citizens Advice consumer service as they maintain a national database of complaints that provides an invaluable source of information and intelligence to the trading standards community**

**Details of all consumer enquiries, dealt with by the Citizens Advice consumer helpline, are made available to Trading Standards**

**If you are in immediate danger, contact the police on 999**

**Pre Shopping Tips when choosing a trader**

**Check schemes that recommend traders**

**You might need to try more than one scheme to find one that covers your area and the kind of trader you’re looking for. You can try:**

* [**TrustMark**](https://www.trustmark.org.uk/find-a-tradesman)**- the Government’s trader scheme**
* [**the Consumer Codes Approval Scheme**](https://www.tradingstandards.uk/consumers)
* [**Buy with Confidence**](https://www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk/)
* [**Checkatrade**](https://www.checkatrade.com/)
* [**Which? Trusted Trader**](https://trustedtraders.which.co.uk/)

**If you’ve already got a trader in mind, they might say they’re a member of a scheme on their website or any letters they’ve sent you. You should check the scheme’s website to make sure they’re really a member**

**Recommendations and references are good ways to find reliable contractors who do a good job**

**If you can’t get personal recommendations from people you know, ask contractors for references. It’s best to get:**

* **2 or 3 recent examples of similar work they’ve done**
* **contact details for the people they did the work for - it’s best to get in touch because written references aren’t always genuine**
* **A quote is a promise from the contractor to do the work at a fixed price, An estimate is an approximate price that may change**
* **Don’t rely on a verbal quote - get it in writing**
* **Some contractors charge for quotes - ask about this first**
* **Try to get written quotes from at least 3 different contractors before you decide on one. Comparing quotes will help you decide if you’re getting a fair price**
* **After you say yes to a quote, it’s a binding agreement between you and the contractor, whether it’s written down or not. But having it in writing means you can check what you agreed and prove it if there’s a dispute later**

**What a quote should include**

**Be very clear about the work you want done - this will help you get the most accurate price and prevent misunderstandings later**

**A quote should include:**

* **a fixed total price - not a daily rate**
* **a breakdown of all the work to be done and the materials needed**
* **separate costs for each material and part of the work**
* **how long the price is valid for**
* **if the price includes VAT**
* **when the price can go up, eg only if you agree to extra work**

**If you get a daily rate instead of a fixed total price there’s a risk the contractor could string out the work to get more money. Avoid this by getting them to put in writing:**

* **how many days the work will take**
* **how many hours of work counts as a day**
* **when they need your go-ahead to work more days**



 