

**BEWARE**  
**THE SUMMER**  
**DOORKNOCKERS!**



Every year in Britain, mostly over the summer months, thousands of householders are fleeced by **rogue door-to-door home maintenance traders** masquerading as professionals, selling anything from roofing repairs, guttering and gardening services to path and driveway work.\*

These rogue callers frighten their potential targets by suggesting they have loose tiles, problems with pointing, damp or guttering, or that their driveway is in need of repair. They lie and cheat to extort money in return for little or no work at all and last year stole over £1.36 billion\*\* from unsuspecting homeowners across Britain.



The Federation of Master Builders, the UK's largest building trade association, says it's time for UK homeowners to wise up to these bogus builders, and advises homeowners to **"Never, ever, buy from someone offering building services at the door,"** a message endorsed by Trading Standards.

The FMB is making a stand to distance professional builders from the crooks and rogues who operate as if they are part of the building industry, swindling people out of millions of pounds.

Anyone who turns up at the door and tries to frighten you into having work done is a crook. A decent tradesperson will have a queue of customers waiting for them to start work on their home – they won't have time to knock on your door. Only ever employ builders who have been recommended to you, or who are proven members of a reputable trade association such as the FMB, and who can provide you with references, which you should check out.

\* Consumer Direct (Office of Fair Trading) figures for 2006-7

\*\* Figure supplied by Trading Standards

## How to spot a rogue trader

Cold callers may use these lines to frighten homeowners into doing business with them

*“You have loose tiles on your roof”*

*“Your roof has been leaking”*

*“I see cracked brickwork on your house”*

*“You need to have some pointing on your chimney”*

*“You need some work doing on your driveway”*

*“I’m doing some work in the area and have materials left over which we need to use up”*

*“I’m doing some work for the council down the road”*

*“I’m doing free property surveys to check if you have any rising damp”*

*“Your brickwork is acting like a sponge soaking up the rainwater” (Ignore this popular line as bricks are supposed to behave like this!!)*

These are the things cold callers will say need doing

*Roofing repairs*

*Gardening services, tree surgery*

*Path or driveway work*

*Block paving or tarmac driveways*

*Damp proofing*

*General maintenance work*

*Guttering repairs*

*Fascia boarding repairs*

*Wall surface coatings*

How do I get rid of these rogues?

*Do not engage in conversation with them*

*Say you do not buy goods and services at the door*

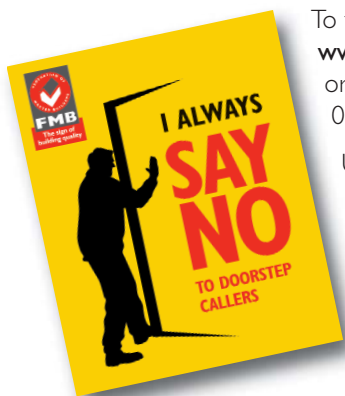
*Say you need to compare prices*

*Say you have to discuss it with your partner, son, daughter or friend*

*In the case of the elderly, particularly those living alone, it is well worth thinking about having a son or daughter authorised as a joint signatory on bank accounts for amounts over, say £200.*

If you think your house needs work, then these are the steps you should take.

- Never employ a cold caller
- Always use a professional builder who is recommended for doing similar work or a bona fide member of a trade association, such as the Federation of Master Builders. With more than 13,000 vetted builders throughout the UK, the FMB's website, [www.findabuilder.co.uk](http://www.findabuilder.co.uk) is a good place to start.
- Talk to the builder's previous customers. Go and see the jobs they have done and make sure the customers were happy. Check they completed the job properly and came within budget.
- Produce a detailed written specification for the work you want done.
- Ask at least three builders to provide written quotes.
- Make sure the builders' quotes cover everything you would like done, including the supply of materials, removal of rubbish and making good after the work is finished.
- Once you have decided on a builder, then prepare a written contract, itemising what work is to be done and include details of payments to be made as various stages of the work are completed. This contract should be signed before any work starts. Log on to [www.findabuilder.co.uk](http://www.findabuilder.co.uk) to download a **free** FMB contract that can be used for any building project.
- Make sure the builder has the appropriate level of public liability insurance for the work to be carried out on your home.



To find a good builder, visit [www.findabuilder.co.uk](http://www.findabuilder.co.uk) or call the freephone number 08000 152522.

Use the FMB sticker to keep rogue builders at bay.

