



## PUBLIC AWARENESS

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Non-Emergency 303.237.2220 Fax 303.235.2949

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

7/21/2009 7:33 PM

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**

Public Information Officer  
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### Wheat Ridge Storm Aftermath and Clean Up Brings Scams Citizens Should Take Precautions to Protect Themselves

**Wheat Ridge, CO** – Following the major storm that hit the north west side of Wheat Ridge about 9:45 p.m. on July 20, 2009 citizens should be advised of a group of thieves, commonly known as “Travelers” that have already descended upon our community with the primary purpose of taking advantage of our citizens by scamming them on various types of home damage and debris clean up:

- Tree Trimming
- Fence Repair
- Roofing Repair
- Siding Repair
- Other home repairs as a result of the storm

The thieves will require payment upfront and then generally, one of two scenarios will occur; they never return to start the job, or they start the job but never return to finish it. Because these people are scam artists and not legitimate workers, they do more damage than good. The homeowner is then left with additional repairs and clean up needs that are far more extensive and expensive than the original repairs ever were.

Travelers usually drive pick-up trucks with out-of-state license plates. They may also be pulling work equipment on a trailer behind the truck. These thieves may look like legitimate contractors but they are not.

It can be difficult for Law Enforcement to investigate these crimes because, in most cases, the victim does not even realize they have been scammed until the thief is long gone.

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Some tips for citizens:

- Be very leery of anyone who just shows up at your door and tells you “they were just driving in your neighborhood” and that they have noticed a serious problem, defect, or damage that needs to be fixed right-a-way.
- Never let anyone in your house you do not know.
- Never pay for work that has not been completed to your satisfaction.
- Never sign your name to a contract without first checking the company out. If the company is reputable, they will not mind if you ask for references.
- Never feel pressured to make a quick decision, and/or to sign anything.
  - Have the company leave contact information with you. Then, before signing any contract, check with family, friends, neighbors, The Better Business Bureau, or the police if you have any questions or are unsure of the company.
  - If you identify repair needs on your property, take your time and shop around.
- Protect yourself from Identity Theft. Never give an unknown person your personal information:
  - Name
  - Date of Birth
  - Credit Card Information
  - Checking or Savings Account numbers.
  - Your Social Security number
- Don't be afraid or embarrassed to call the police if you feel you may be a victim of a scam. Early intervention/investigation is critical in these cases. It can help catch the thief and maybe prevent another innocent person from becoming a victim.

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Storm brings Scams

Remember, if the offer sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

**Citizens should immediately contact the Wheat Ridge Police Department at 303.237.2220 should they believe they have fallen victim to a traveler's scam or have any questions.**

**Debris Collection Point Information:**

The City has established a collection point for tree limbs and leaves at 4200 Kipling Street, just north of the Wheat Ridge Recreation Center.

The collection point is for Wheat Ridge residents only. Proof of residency will be required with a photo I.D. showing a Wheat Ridge address, or a photo of I.D. and a utility bill showing a Wheat Ridge address.

The collection point is for property and homeowners only. No private contractors please.

Debris will be accepted from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. for the next few days.

Residents with questions can call 303-231-1307 for more information.

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