

Denver District Attorney

FRAUD ALERT!

From the Office of Denver District Attorney **Mitch Morrissey**

BEWARE OF FURNACE FRAUD

Fraudulent contractors and furnace salespersons often use scare tactics. They may insist that you must buy a new furnace immediately due to leaking gas and the potential of a catastrophic explosion. They may tell you that the "heat exchanger" or "combustion chamber" is cracked or has a hole. Or they may simply say that your furnace is too small and should be replaced with a larger one. If a contractor says you need expensive work **immediately**, don't panic. Keep in mind the following tips:

- All heating contractors are required to be licensed and to get a **permit** from the Building Department before doing any major work. Ask for verification of a license and the permit. To verify if a contractor is licensed in Denver call 720-865-2770 or go to www.denvergov.org/contractor licensing. (Note the "underscore" between "contractor" and "licensing".)
- Check out all contractors with the Better Business Bureau. 303-758-2100 and your city Building Department before inviting a serviceperson into your home for an estimate or service.
- If you are told your furnace needs to be replaced, get a second opinion from a licensed contractor whom you have checked out with the BBB.
- Remember that once the old furnace has been removed, proof of its original condition is impossible to verify, making it difficult to recover your losses or to prosecute for fraud.
- RESIST if a salesperson gives you a high-pressured sales pitch, especially if you are solicited at your door or by phone by an unfamiliar contractor.

For assistance call the Denver DA's Fraud Line: 720-913-9179 February 2009