



DenverDA

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Consumer Advisory !!!

Furnace Inspection Imposters Blow Hot Air

As the nights get cooler and thoughts turn to winterizing the home, con artists who pose as furnace inspectors start making an appearance. Dressed as utility company or city employees, they will often use scare tactics such as concerns about gas build-up, or fears about high carbon monoxide levels as a ploy to get inside your house. There are a variety of frauds and thefts associated with these scams. Thieves may be trying to get in to steal valuables such as jewelry or cash. Others conduct bogus tests, and then charge a fee for their service. The most costly scam involves those who fabricate a furnace problem, and then offer to fix or replace it, leaving you out money and a damaged furnace that will require further repair.

Sometimes energy companies must enter homes to read old meters and to inspect newly installed furnaces and water heaters. Legitimate companies or city employees will have well marked vehicles and clothing, as well as identification. In the City of Denver, furnace contractors must be licensed in order to get a permit. To verify if a contractor is licensed, contact the Denver Building Department at 720-865-2770.

Having your furnace periodically inspected is a good idea, but should be an action that you initiate. Reputable energy companies will usually conduct these inspections for residents. Before letting them in, always verify that inspectors are who they say they are. Call the company using a telephone number off of a recent invoice, and never let anyone in until you've checked their credentials. Call the Better Business Bureau at 303-758-2100. They can verify if the person is licensed and has a good business rating. Finally, get a second opinion from a licensed contractor.

For more information on winter appliance safety tips, click on:

www.xcelenergy.com/Colorado/Company/Safety/Pages/Winter-Safety-Tips.aspx

Denver DA's Fraud Line: 720-913-9179

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