



NEWS RELEASE

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ATTORNEY GENERAL, CONSUMER PROTECTION AND DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE URGE CAUTION WHEN DOING BUSINESS WITH TRANSIENT VENDORS

PIERRE, S.D. – Attorney General Jason Ravensborg, the Division of Consumer Protection and the South Dakota Department of Revenue warn consumers to be wary of transient vendors once again.

“Don’t be taken advantage of this year,” cautioned Ravensborg. “Make sure vendors are legitimate before doing business with them by asking for proof of a South Dakota business tax license. A majority of these contractors are legitimate, but there is always a handful seeking to take advantage of the current situation.”

Even with the current social distancing throughout the state and nation the Department of Revenue is receiving calls about vendor licensing. It is vitally important for consumers to do their due diligence to ensure that they do not become the victim of a scam.

Here are some suggestions to keep in mind when dealing with a transient vendor:

- Homeowners should look for a reliable contractor with a proven track record who readily offers credentials.
- Ask for references. Legitimate vendors should be more than willing to provide a list of satisfied customers to verify their work.
- Ask for the details in writing.
- Ask for sales tax or contractor’s excise tax license.
- Obtain a local permit, if required.
- Ask for a price quote in advance and in writing.
- Question the contractor about a permanent address and telephone number. If the information they provide is local, do not assume they are a local business. Transient vendors often have business cards printed with local mailing services or motel addresses and telephone numbers.
- Ask for a list of local references and check them before making a decision.
- Be careful about paying for work in advance. Before making final payments, make sure transient vendors have paid their local suppliers or you may be held liable for unpaid materials.
- Pay by check. Avoid on-the-spot cash payments. The safest route is to write a check to the contracting company not an individual.

If you have questions regarding transient vendors contact the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division at 1-800-300-1986, email at consumerhelp@state.sd.us or call the South Dakota Department of Revenue's toll-free helpline at 800-829-9188, press "1" for the business tax division.

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