

Meat Sale Pitch Increases Locally

Meat...it's what's for dinner, but should only be purchased from safe, reputable sources.

That reminder comes as door to door meat sales people make their way into Brown County, leading to many complaints received by the Brown County Sheriff's Department.

Sheriff John Merchant says complaints range from the poor quality of meat being sold to the rude tactics being used by the sales people:

:10 oc does business

The safest step, according to authorities, is to avoid doing business with any unknown sources.

The Kansas Attorney General's office reminds consumers that such sales people must make customers aware, at the time of sale, that Kansas has a "cooling off rule."

That means any sale made at a home, or non-permanent place of business, can be canceled within three days of purchase.

Two copies of a cancellation form, and copy of the contract, or receipt, must also be provided by law.

Any door to door salesperson who fails to do so is likely attempting some type of scam, and should be avoided.

A list of ways the Attorney General says consumers can keep themselves safe is posted below:

Consumer Corner: Be cautious of door-to-door sales

by Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt

This time of year, our office receives many complaints from consumers regarding door-to-door sales.

Lately, we've seen an increase in these complaints, especially those regarding the sale of meat and security systems. So, here are a few tips to help keep you safe from high-pressure sales, which may even be outright scams.

Know your rights. Kansas law guarantees you three days to cancel any purchase of \$25 or more made in your home or at a location that is not the permanent place of business or local address of the seller, often referred to as the "Cooling-Off Rule." The salesperson must verbally inform you of your cancellation rights at the time of sale. You also must be given two copies of a cancellation form and a copy of your contract or receipt.

The contract or receipt must be dated, show the name and address of the seller, be in a large legible font and explain your right to cancel. The contract or receipt must be in the same language used in the sales presentation. If you wish to cancel and you did not receive two copies of the cancellation policy, for your records, be sure to copy the signed and dated policy that you are mailing to the company. It is also suggested you send this cancellation by certified mail so you can track it. Companies are then required to refund the customer's money within 10 days of receiving the cancellation. Under this Cooling-Off Rule, it is also against Kansas law for the salespersons or the company to cash your check within this three-day period.

Meat Sales:

Ask for documentation. Ask for written information on the company and dealer and take plenty of time to read it. If you lack the time to check into the distribution practices of the company, consider not purchasing at that point in time. Once you have read the information and researched the company, you can contact them to come back and make a purchase then. Reputable companies will have a local sales office with a published price list that includes the address and phone number of the company. Along with the price list, the company may offer recipes and nutritional information about its products. You can also check the company online through the Better Business Bureau at www.bbb.com. Look at the label. U.S. Department of Agriculture- (USDA) and state-inspected products are required to have the inspection legend or “bug” and give information about the product on the label. On raw products, species, cut, net weight, ingredients and safe handling instructions are required. No ingredient, including marinades or other flavorings, may be added to fresh meat or poultry unless the ingredient is listed on the label. Beware of any dealer who wants you to purchase bulk quantities of meat and poultry that are not properly labeled. Always ask the dealer to leave the box or labeling information if individual products are not labeled. If a product is labeled with a term such as “restaurant quality,” ask the company which USDA grade is comparable. For additional information contact the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-674-6854 or www.fsis.usda.gov.

Ask to see a retail food permit. In Kansas, door-to-door meat salespersons are required to have a state license or permit to sell meat, just like a regular retailer. Ask to see the salesperson’s license to sell. Contact the Kansas Department of Agriculture at (785) 296-5600 to see if the company is licensed. State or federal inspections are mandatory for meat and poultry being transported and sold within Kansas. The state inspection programs must enforce requirements at least equal to those of federal inspection laws. Compare the price. Meat is required to be priced by the pound so you can comparison shop.

Security Alarm Companies:

Do your research. Some cities require security alarm companies to have a license, including Topeka and Wichita. Some even require each technician installing an alarm to be licensed. Make sure you know what your city requires by calling your City Hall, and ask any technicians who come to your door to show you the appropriate license. Before you install an alarm system, check the company through the Better Business Bureau website at www.bbb.com.

Check your contracts. If you have a current alarm and they want to replace your old system, make sure you are not still obligated through a contractual agreement with your current security company.

Remember, it’s always best to control your own transactions, rather than giving in to a high-pressure salesperson standing at your doorstep. If you experience any problems with door-to-door sales, please call our Consumer Protection Division at 1-800-432-2310 or go online to www.ag.ks.gov to file a complaint. It’s our job to make sure Kansans’ rights as consumers are observed and protected.

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