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When an Unwanted Person Knocks on your Front Door

You are not obligated to open the door to anyone. Talk to the person through the door. You don't know the person, so don't open the door! It sounds simple, but if you don't open the door they will go away. Don't let them pressure you into opening the door.

When someone knocks at your door, acknowledge you are home. Talk through the door without opening it. If you don't answer, and it happens to be a criminal type, they may attempt to break into your home. Communities within the Northeast District have experienced burglaries where the suspects knock on the front door, and if there is no answer, they break into the rear of the home.

Steps to take when an unwanted person is at your front door:

- Ask what they need. If it is a car problem, offer to call their road service for them. If it is an accident, call 9-1-1 for them. The idea is to keep them outside and you make the call for them. There is a chance that it is legitimate and a chance that they may be scamming you. So protect yourself first. Call a neighbor as well so you're not dealing with it alone.
- Ask the person at your door to stand by while you place the call. If the person(s) stays, it is a good chance that they are legitimate; however, if they leave quickly, it is probably a con.
- If you want the person at your door to leave, tell them. If they refuse to leave, summons the police via 911. Take a good look at their face, clothing, any distinguishing features, direction of travel, another person, a vehicle, etc. This will be information useful to the police.
- If they refuse to leave when the police arrive, they can be arrested for trespassing, but this will require you to appear in court with the officer and testify you told them to leave your property and they refused.
- Think about what to say at the doorstep to cold callers in advance. And keep a list of key contact numbers near your phone so you can check out legitimate callers. Ask all other unwanted callers to go away.
- Do not rely on a door chain for security. Partially opening a door equipped with a door chain is a practice that must be discouraged. The door is not secured. A door chain cannot withstand physical force.
- Identification should always be verified before opening the door. A wide angle door viewer is an absolute must if visibility of callers is not possible. Service representatives should have appointments and not just "show up" at your door.