

From the Desk of Dave Rodwell



CONTROLLING CORPORATE CRIME

Fraudulent Home Renovations

Many years ago, I investigated a group of “gypsies” that surfaced every summer. They were looking for easy to fleece individuals that needed home or farm repairs. They were called the “Williamson” gang. They were based out of the United States, and would come into southern Alberta and Saskatchewan to do fraudulent renovations. They tended to pick on rural seniors, with roofing scams, and painting barns and fences. The work always looked good until the first rain. Then the paint would wash off, or the roof would leak. They had dozens of different scams. They were smooth and hard to catch. When we would finally catch up to them, they would get bail and then slide back across the border. They would either stay out of the country until warrants expired or return the next year, with different names, or operate in different areas.

There are still remnants of them around, but we don’t need to look state side for fraud renovation artists. We have lots of home grown con artists.

Continually we hear about individuals that have been taken by contractors who don’t live up to their words, advertisements and what is in the contract.

Here are some tips so that you don’t become a victim:

Be very cautious of contractors who:

- Offer a free home inspection and then suggest major repairs.
- Who need to be paid a large down payment, with the excuse that it is to buy materials. Most contractors have bridge financing or charge accounts with their suppliers.
- Offer a large discount to use your home to advertise their work. That price offer is made to everyone.
- Knock on your door to offer you a “discount” price as they are already working in the neighborhood.
- Quote you a price without seeing exactly what needs to be done.

To find a good contractor, your best bet is to ask around. Satisfied Customers will not hesitate to recommend a good contractor. Look around your neighborhood for similar work, and ask the home owner about the work and the contractor. Ask if you can see the renovation and check out the quality of the work done.

Some of the larger building supply and hardware stores, do home improvement work, and know and recommend reliable contractors. A check with your local Better Business Bureau can supply you with a list of member firms, or provide advice about the contractor.

As the home owner you need to decide the scope of the work and select the contractor. You need to describe the job completely and correctly in a contract. It is the owner's responsibility to ensure zoning approval and permits are obtained and any necessary inspections are completed. The contractor will often make the inspection arrangements.

You need to periodically check to make sure the work is being done to your satisfaction. If you notice some work appears to be amiss, question it at once. Don't wait until it is covered with wallboard. Don't make the final payment until you are satisfied that the work has been completed as contracted.

In the majority of fraudulent renovation cases, the contractor:

- Does not have local business license or provincial license where applicable
- Will not have a Canada GST number
- Does not have worker's compensation coverage.

By following these tips, you will greatly reduce your chances of being victimized by most of these criminals. Yes fraud is a crime, but poor workmanship or being high priced is not necessarily a crime. Always be cautious and remember if it seems too good to be true, it most likely is.



Dave Rodwell

Your audience will never forget Dave Rodwell. Using security strategies that are street-smart, practical and easily implemented in your daily life or corporation, Dave motivates his audiences to action, to prevent them being the victim of a crime.

In an entertaining manner, Dave imparts his gems of wisdom based on 28 years of investigating major crimes with the RCMP, and a 20 year business career as an investigator and security consultant.

Using personal crime stories to illustrate his points, Dave will leave the audience with wisdom and the motivation, to take steps to reduce the chances of being a crime victim.

Find out why Dave Rodwell is your best choice if you are looking for a high impact, thought provoking speaker for corporate or association meetings, conventions, lectures or special events.

Dave speaks on a wide variety of corporate and personal security topics.

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