The Town of Poughkeepsie Police Department reminds residents to be careful of “scams” with the arrival of spring, particularly against the elderly. Scams may involve driveway paving, general home repair, chimney cleaning, gutter repair or tree trimming. These scams involve contractors who go door-to-door and either request payment up front and do not do the work or do a poor job and overcharge when the work is completed. The contractor will first request cash for payment but if they cannot get cash, they will try for a check that is made out to a person’s name rather than business name. Then the service provider will proceed to the bank to cash it and victims will never see or hear from them again.

Tips to Consider to Avoid Door-to-Door Scammers:

1) Do not do business with door to door sales people. Seek out the service yourself or referrals from friends or family.

2) Contractors should always be able to prove that they have a contractor’s license and insurance.

3) Don’t do business on the spot. Get good references. Don’t be pressured by a limited time offer or “fantastic deal”.

4) Make payment by check (payable to a business name) or by credit card. Never pay with cash!

5) A receipt is worthless unless the business is valid and reputable.

6) Don’t be afraid to offend someone by not doing business with him or her.

7) Read contracts closely. Sign the contracts and make sure to get a copy of a signed contract before the work is performed.

8) Anyone soliciting business or selling products door-to-door in the Town of Poughkeepsie must obtain a Peddler’s Permit from Town Hall and produce it to you when soliciting business.

If you feel intimidated or uncomfortable, lock your door and call the Town of Poughkeepsie Police Department at 845-485-3666. Obtain as much information about the solicitor such as personal description, clothing, vehicle description, license plate and the direction in which they left.