



# NEWS FROM SCDCA

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS  
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1.800.922.1594 (toll free in SC)

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### *Scam Alert: Locksmith Swindlers*

**Columbia, SC...** The South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs (SCDCA) is warning the public about an increasingly prevalent scam that preys on consumers locked out of their car or home. Upon calling a “local” locksmith, the consumer receives a price quote. Once the locksmith arrives to perform the work, the price goes up substantially. Although feeling slighted, the urgency of this situation often results in the consumer giving in.

A common thread of this fraud is the use of a “local” number in the phonebook that actually redirects callers out-of-state. Another red flag is a company that has no address or uses a fake address. Matching an address to a phone number can filter out many of the scammers and can usually be done through a simple internet search. Follow the additional tips below to avoid becoming a victim of this scam:

- ***Plan ahead-*** Research reputable locksmiths before the need arises and save their contact information. Contact SCDCA to see if we have any complaints on file. Also, do a quick internet search on the company. Other consumers may have complained about the company through online message boards.
- ***Do they belong to any Associations?-*** Trade associations often have “Best Practices” their members must adhere to. Check with the Associated Locksmiths of America by visiting [www.findalocksmith.com](http://www.findalocksmith.com).
- ***Ask for the registered name of the business-*** If the company answers the phone with a vague name like “locksmith services,” beware. Ask for the registered name of the business and if they aren’t willing to give it, hang up.
- ***Be suspicious of low estimates-*** Ask for an estimate when calling and ask for it in writing **before** any work begins. Contact two to three companies to compare pricing. If a very low price is quoted- \$10 or \$20- this is indicative of a scam.

***-more-***

- ***Ask for identification and a business card-*** Also, be wary of unmarked cars. Typically, a locksmith will have company insignia on their vehicles. Don't be afraid to send them away if they seem suspicious.
- ***Pay with a credit card-*** Credit cards offer more consumer fraud protections. A locksmith asking for cash only is also a sign of a scam.

For more information on scams, or to report a scam, consumers can visit SCDC's website at [www.consumer.sc.gov](http://www.consumer.sc.gov) or call 800-922-1594.

***-end-***

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SCDC's aims to protect consumers from inequities in the marketplace through advocacy, complaint mediation, enforcement and education. To file a complaint or get information on consumer issues, visit [www.consumer.sc.gov](http://www.consumer.sc.gov) or call toll-free, 1.800.922.1594.

***Connect with us:***

