



NEWS RELEASE

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Police Warn of Possible Scam

The Culpeper Police Department wants to warn the public of a possible scam involving a man posing as a county inspector checking into possible chimney fraud.

Culpeper County Administrator Frank Bossio said Friday county building inspectors do not provide that service.

A 79-year-old woman reported to town police that a white male between 25 and 30 years old came to her house Thursday morning and identified himself as a county inspector. He arrived in black truck with a ladder in the bed. Another man remained in the truck.

The man told the woman that the “inspector’s office” was investigating fraud involving chimney work. After some discussion, the man placed a ladder on the house and climbed onto the roof to inspect the chimney. The victim heard noises on the roof. When the man came down he told the woman that the chimney cap was loose, and he held a brick in his hand, indicating that there was something wrong with the chimney.

The woman then asked the “inspector” if he knew anyone who could fix the chimney. He said that he did. But before any further deal was made the woman told the man she wouldn’t be home the rest of the day. She said that she would be home Friday and to come back.

However, she became suspicious of the entire situation. After the man left, she called the county building inspections office and was told that the county doesn’t do that kind of inspection. The woman then called police to report the incident.

When police arrived, they examined the chimney from ground level and didn't notice any missing bricks.

Bossio said that all county employees carry county-issued identification cards.

"If anybody claims to be a government official, ask for verification of their credentials," said Culpeper Police Capt. Ricky Pinksaw.

In addition to all county employees having identification, Bossio said all county inspection vehicles are marked with the county seal on the doors.

The woman never left her home while the man was on the roof. Capt. Pinksaw warned that people should not allow themselves to be distracted as an accomplice could be nearby and try to enter the unattended home while outside with the scam artist and steal valuables or cash.

The woman was smart by staying in her home and calling police.

"If you are approached by someone you feel is suspicious, get as much information as possible about them and their vehicle and call 911," the captain said.

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