

## Don't fall victim to high pressure magazine sellers this summer

Written by

Thursday, 23 June 2011 13:41

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The Better Business Bureau of Minnesota and North Dakota (BBB) receives thousands of complaints each year from consumers who have unknowingly purchased multi-year magazine subscriptions. Unscrupulous telemarketers sometimes trick consumers into buying subscriptions to magazines they don't want or can't afford. The BBB is warning that deceptive door-to-door magazine sales crews are also hitting the pavement this summer and they're looking to earn a quick buck.

Oftentimes, these in-person presentations are so slick that consumers aren't even aware that they've purchased magazine subscriptions – until they receive the bill. The BBB has already received almost 700 complaints regarding door-to-door magazine sellers and dealers this year, a number that's well on its way to topping last year's nearly 1,200 complaints. These high pressure sellers use practiced tactics that can hook almost anyone.

"With summer here, you can bet an eager group of door knockers from all trades will be at your front doorstep," said Dana Badgerow, president and CEO of the BBB. "Most complaints against salespeople selling magazine subscriptions allege that sales representatives took their check and the magazines never arrived, while other complainants allege being subjected to high-pressure and misleading sales tactics."

### **The BBB recommends the following on how to handle door-to-door magazine sellers:**

**Listen carefully and be aware of high pressure sales tactics.** Some unscrupulous door-to-door sellers will put pressure on you to close the deal at that moment, and even make special offers to entice you. Listen to their tone. Are they speaking more loudly as they get deeper into their sales pitch? Are they ignoring you despite your saying that you're not interested? If so, find a way to end the conversation quickly.

**Stand strong.** Do not invite unsolicited salespeople into your home. If you do allow a salesperson inside and decide during the presentation that you are not interested in making a purchase, simply ask them to leave. If the salesperson refuses to leave, tell them you will call the police – and follow through if they don't leave immediately.

**Verify the individual and the company.** If you are interested in buying from a door-to-door magazine salesperson, get everything in writing including price, subscription duration and all terms and conditions. Tell the salesperson you will check it out and get back to him or her. Ask for a business card and contact information. Look the company up yourself and check to verify the salesperson is an employee. Also, be sure to take the time to check out the company's BBB Business Review at [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org).

**Know your rights.** The Federal Trade Commission's Three-Day Cooling-Off Rule gives the customer three days to cancel purchases over \$25 that are made in their home or at a location that is not the seller's permanent place of business. Along with a receipt, salespeople should also include a completed cancellation form that customers can send to the company to cancel the agreement. By law, the company must give customers a refund within 10 days of receiving the cancellation notice.

Victims of fraudulent magazine sales can file a complaint with their Better Business Bureau at

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[www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org)

, as well as with their local law enforcement, and state Attorney General's offices.

The mission of the Better Business Bureau is to promote, through self-regulation, the highest standards of business ethics and conduct, and to instill public confidence in responsible businesses through programs of education and action that inform, protect and assist the general public. Our hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Contact the BBB at [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org) or 651-699-1111, toll-free at 1-800-646-6222.