

CONSUMER ALERT

Consumer Services offers tips for hiring a Locksmith

September 9, 2005

The Department of Consumer Services recently prosecuted a locksmith company for fraudulent and deceptive activities. This company was operating under many different names, and charging excessive amounts for its services.

To help protect consumers, DCS offers the following tips when choosing a locksmith.

- ▶ Ask family, friends or neighbors for a referral.
- ▶ If you are calling a locksmith after obtaining a phone number from a phone directory, Internet or 411, confirm their location before requesting a professional locksmith to meet you. Write this phone number down for future reference.
- ▶ Get an estimate for all work and replacement parts from the locksmith before work begins. In cases of “lock-outs,” or being locked out of your home or car, most legitimate locksmiths will give you an estimate over the phone for the total cost of the work.
- ▶ Some legitimate locksmiths will work out of a car for quick jobs, but most will arrive in a service vehicle – a van or truck that is clearly marked.
- ▶ Be cautious of any locksmith that immediately tells you the lock has to be drilled and replaced. An experienced locksmith has invested in the tools and education to provide quality service, and can unlock almost any door.
- ▶ Ask to see the locksmiths license.
- ▶ The locksmith should ask who you are. When opening a home, business or car, a locksmith is mandated by the State of Illinois to obtain and record specific information before opening a lock.
- ▶ If you are not comfortable, you can refuse to work with the locksmith.
- ▶ Never sign a blank form authorizing work.
- ▶ Always get an itemized invoice.

If you cannot resolve a dispute with a locksmith or feel that you have been defrauded, call 311 to file a consumer complaint. A representative from the Department of Consumer Services will investigate.

Be certain to record all facts and details, including the phone number you dialed. Retain all documents and invoices.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT US BY DIALING 311
FROM CHICAGO**