

MEMO TO ALL CON MEN: YOUR DAYS ARE NUMBERED

The stories of unscrupulous contractors who prey on our most vulnerable citizens are, sadly, all too familiar.

An elderly couple needs a new roof on their home. They sign an agreement with a fast-talking salesman who puts on an Academy Award-worthy performance.

“All I need now is a down payment,” the salesman declares, “and we’ll start work first thing in the morning”.

The elderly couple never sees the man ... or their money ever again.

In an effort to crackdown on fraudulent contractors, the state has given more authority to local commissioners of revenue. Here’s how the new system works:

When a contractor enters the Office of Norfolk Commissioner of Revenue Sharon McDonald to apply for or renew a business license, the contractor will face a much more stringent application process.

The applicant must offer proof that he or she is licensed or certified as a contractor. The law also prohibits any locality from issuing or renewing a business license unless the contractor has furnished his or her license or certificate number.

The bill to regulate state contractors was introduced in the 2010 General Assembly by Delegate Glen Oder of Newport News. The Commissioner of Revenue Association aggressively lobbied the General Assembly for passage of the legislation.

McDonald said the law was “desperately needed”.

“The law provides one more important safeguard to protect our citizens, in particular our senior citizens, from fraudulent contractors,” McDonald said.

The Commissioner of Revenue also added this advice:

“If a person show up at your door claiming to be a contractor, demand to see the license before discussing any repair project”, McDonald said. “There’s no substitute for common sense”.