

Door to Door Solicitors and Peddlers

The Village of Bethalto frequently receives inquiries regarding persons going door to door and soliciting. Please review the following information about our solicitation guidelines and some suggestions for interacting with solicitors. *Please note that all resident charitable, non-profit organizations in this municipality which have been in existence for six (6) months or longer shall be exempt from the provisions of the Village's Solicitor code.*

Solicitors within the Village of Bethalto must apply for and be approved for a permit to solicit in the Village. Per Village code solicitors must adhere to the following guidelines and rules regulating door-to-door solicitation:

- Must cease solicitation upon owner or occupant request
- Must obey posted "No Solicitor Invited" or "No Soliciting" signs
- Must carry/display their permit while they are soliciting and must provide proof of permit to anyone who asks
- May only ring bells, knock, or engage with residents for solicitation between the hours of 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Soliciting is prohibited on Sunday or any State or National holiday.

If a solicitor does not display or cannot produce a signed, sealed Village permit, they may not be licensed to solicit within the Village of Bethalto and may be reported to the Bethalto Police Department by calling (618) 377-5266. During normal business hours, you may also contact the Village Clerk's office at (618) 377-8051, extension 5, to determine if a solicitor's permit is valid.

Pushy, rude, or aggressive solicitors:

Beyond the restrictions listed above, the Village of Bethalto cannot directly regulate the demeanor of individual solicitors. Remember however, that as a homeowner or occupant you may at any time ask a solicitor to leave your property. Every resident has the right to feel secure in their home, should you feel threatened or unsafe based upon a solicitor's behavior, contact the Police Department immediately at (618) 377-5266. In an emergency, call 911.

The Village encourages residents having complaints about aggressive or deceptive practices of a business to file a consumer complaint with the Illinois Attorney General's Office at (800) 243-0618.

Alternative Energy Suppliers (Aggregation Solicitors):

Residents should specifically be aware of door-to-door energy supplier sales and solicitations. Residents should be aware that the Village of Bethalto does not send people door to door to register residents for the supply of alternate energy.

The Village encourages residents who wish to sign up with their own energy provider to initiate first contact with the provider after comparing all rates and options. When evaluating energy suppliers, residents are encouraged to visit the Illinois Commerce Commission's complaint scorecard which tracks and compares the rate of complaints against retail electric suppliers and energy providers.

Residents who encounter a pushy, rude, or aggressive aggregation solicitor are urged to contact the Illinois Commerce Commission Consumer Services Division which regulates energy retailers. Their phone number is (800) 524-0795.

Guarding Your Personal Information:

Citizens should never compromise their security by providing a solicitor with utility account information unless they intend to enroll in an alternate energy program of their own choosing. The Village recommends that residents carefully protect their account information and energy billing information from solicitors and all other non-account holders.

How to Prevent Solicitors at Your Home:

Prominently display a no soliciting notice on or near the main entrance by way of a sign measuring at least 3" x 4" in size. No soliciting notices should read in letters at least 1/3" in height: "No Solicitors Invited", "No Soliciting", or comparable language.

It is illegal in the Village of Bethalto to solicit at a location where proper No Soliciting signage has been posted. With or without a sign, residents should not ever be afraid to exercise boundaries with solicitors by refusing to answer their door or by politely stating 'no thank you' or 'not interested' and shutting and locking their door.

Constitutional Rights of Solicitors

The First amendment and the U.S. Constitution protect the rights of door-to-door solicitors and preclude the ability of a community to ban or significantly limit door-to-door sales. The U.S. Supreme Court has upheld free speech for commercial purposes and the Village's ability to restrict commercial door-to-door solicitation is limited to local regulations restricting the time, place, and manner of door-to-door solicitations. Homeowners and occupants, however, do have the ultimate right to determine whether solicitors shall or shall not be invited to their residences or property.

The full Village Code of Ordinances as it relates to Solicitors can be found in Chapter 7, Business Code, Article II-Solicitors. The entire Village code book can be found online at our website Bethalto.com