

# What to know when a salesperson knocks on your door in Whatcom County

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WHATCOM COUNTY, Wash. — In Whatcom County and some Whatcom cities, the first thing you should ask door-to-door solicitors is for their locally issued soliciting license.

In Whatcom County jurisdictions, peddlers and solicitors must be granted a specific license before they can legally knock on your door. These licenses are often in addition to a standard business license.

In most cases, solicitor licenses are issued to the individual, not the company, once a background check has been completed.

According to Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC), a non-profit municipal consulting services agency that serves local governments across Washington State, "Cities, towns, and counties have authority under their police power to license and regulate door-to-door peddlers, solicitors, temporary merchants, and mobile vendors, and to impose reasonable license fees. Such regulations are generally justified if they bear a reasonable relationship to public health, safety, and welfare concerns."

While municipalities often include their specific approaches to handling door-to-door peddlers or solicitors within their municipal code, there are also Washington State laws in place making soliciting without the appropriate license a misdemeanor with potential fines and imprisonment.

Whatcom cities with specific municipal code section addressing peddlers and solicitors include Lynden, Blaine, Sumas, Bellingham and Ferndale (links to the specific municipal code sections). Whatcom County also maintains a section in the County Code.

If an unlicensed peddler or solicitor is in your neighborhood, law enforcement agencies recommend calling 911.

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## Comment from Meadows Board:

When asked for information concerning the appearance of a valid solicitor license, the Whatcom News replied that local police oppose sharing this information because it would make the licenses easier to be fraudulently duplicated.

For link to Ferndale Municipal Code (Chapter 5.20) concerning PEDDLERS AND SOLICITORS, click [HERE](#).