



## Prince William County Police Department Community Awareness

7/14/2015

### Door-to-Door Selling Info for Residents

**Emergency**  
**911**

**Non-Emergency**  
**703-792-6500**

**Crime Prevention**  
**703-792-7270**  
**crimeprevention**  
**@pwcgov.org**

**Crime Solvers**  
**1-866-411-TIPS**  
**703-670-3700**

[www.police.pwcgov.org](http://www.police.pwcgov.org)



Did you know that signs that prohibit **soliciting** are **not** enforceable?

Did you know that signs (or other means of notice) that prohibit **trespassing** are enforceable?

The Police Department receives frequent calls about door-to-door peddling, solicitation and trespassing. A limited amount of this kind of activity is restricted by the [Prince William County Code](#), but there are often misunderstandings about what the police can enforce.

Below is a guideline to help residents determine what is, and is not, allowed in terms of individuals selling goods or services door-to-door.

#### **Door-to-Door Activity**

Door-to-door activity that is **not** restricted:

- Co-op sales related to farm produce, newspapers, firewood, and Christmas trees.
- Political party or candidate activity.
- Charitable, educational, or religious activity.

Door-to-door activity that is subject to restrictions is included within Chapter 18 of the County Code. Specifically:

- Most private entities are required to obtain a [permit](#), and must exhibit it to any resident.
- Door-to-door activity is not permitted from one-half hour after sunset to one-half hour before sunrise.

#### **Under the law:**

- Solicitors' permits are valid for one year, and there is no temporary permit.
- Solicitors must have the permit **in their possession** while engaged in activity (*PW Code 18-16*).
- A business license may be required.
- A health inspection is required for all vendors selling food products that are **not** pre-packaged. The health inspection must be obtained in the county or city where the vehicle is registered.
- A stationary stand requires a solicitor's permit and a Temporary Commercial Activity Permit (TCAP) issued by the County's Zoning Office.
- Exceptions apply for charitable/non-profit organizations – these groups need a TCAP but do **not** need a solicitor's permit.

**When a solicitor comes to your door or neighborhood or business, remember that you have the right to ask to see their solicitor's permit. And remember that the permit is different from the business license.**

#### **What you need to know about handbills (fliers) as advertisements:**

- They may be subject to the restrictions of Chapter 18 of the County Code as outlined above.
- Placing them in/on mailboxes violates U.S. Post Office regulations -- not any local law that is subject to Prince William County Police jurisdiction.
- If they are distributed in such a way that it litters, is a violation of Section 22-132 of the County Code.

#### **Trespassing**

Property owners may prohibit persons from trespassing on their property, but the person must first be put on notice. Signs are enforceable. Verbal, in-person notice will suffice. Written notice, personally served on the party, is optimal.

The Police Department also manages a trespassing program that allows police officers to act as an agent for communities or subdivisions to enforce trespassing offenses. In those communities:

- Areas of common property or private streets **are** enforceable. This includes private trails and play areas.
- Streets under public domain (i.e., those maintained by VDOT) and the sidewalks within the right of way **are not enforceable**.
- Private signs (such as "no soliciting" signs) **may not** be placed in the state right-of-way.

Source: <http://www.pwcgov.org/government/dept/police/Pages/Door-to-Door-Selling.aspx>

**Please remember to report all suspicious activity  
immediately by calling:**

**Emergency: 9-1-1**

**Non-Emergency: 703-792-6500**