

## **Solicitors**

The City of Chester 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.

Solicitors within the City of Chester must apply for and be approved for a permit to solicit in the City.

Per City Ordinance solicitors must adhere to the following guidelines and rules regulating door-to-door solicitation:

- No Soliciting prior to 9:00 am in the morning or after 9:00 pm
- No Soliciting on Saturdays or Sundays
- Must carry and display their permit while they are soliciting
- Solicitors are to respect our residents by being courteous and not to pressure anyone into a contract sale
- If a solicitor does not display and cannot produce a permit, they may not be licensed to solicit within the City of Chester and may be reported to the Chester Police Department by calling 618-826-5454

## **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 City of Chester does not send people door to door to register residents for the supply of alternate energy.

The City 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 energy providers.

Residents who encounter a pushy, rude, or aggressive aggregation solicitors are urged to contact the Illinois Commerce Commission Consumer Services Division which regulates energy retailers by phone at 800-524-0795.

## **Guarding Your Personal Information**

Residents 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 City of Chester 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 “No Solicitors Invited” or comparable language.

It is illegal in the City of Chester 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 door-to-door sales. The U.S. Supreme Court has upheld free speech for commercial purposes and the Town’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.