

From the Office of the Sheriff:

Spring is here and high fuel prices came right along with it. The two are related when it comes to law enforcement. Flowers will not be the only thing to pop up at your home. Soon, you will start to see the traveling fraudulent contractors. The most common contractors you see at your door will be those that “promise” asphalt driveway sealing and roofing. The driveway contractors will offer you a great deal as they will state they just finished a large job in the area and have some excess product. You will fall victim to them and by the time you realize you were hoodwinked they have already cashed your check and left the area.

Other examples of fraudulent contractors are those that offer great deals on roofing, siding and/or rain gutters. They will provide a very affordable bid and ask for a partial payment. After you provide that payment that will be the last time you will see them. You can protect yourself by checking on them thru the Better Business Bureau website at www.wisconsin.bbb.org. The Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection has also established a statewide Transient Home Improvement Fraud Task Force.

Should you decide to use their services, get a business card, vehicle registrations or anything that will help you to follow-up or locate them in the future. Also, ask for local references or names of those they have worked for recently.

With the rising fuel prices we are receiving more complaints of gas drive off's. These are defined as someone who has failed to properly pay for the purchase of fuel. Often times it is a result of forgetfulness and the drive return to pay for the product. Other times it is a glitch in the electronic pay-at-the-pump and you receive fuel but your card is not debited or properly read. Then there are those who just take advantage of the vendor and leave without paying. We have even had those who purchased other products are asked by the clerk “did you have gas?” The person lies and say's “no.”

These calls are frustrating and more of a nuisance. It requires a deputy to respond to the store and take the information and conduct follow-up if the vehicle can be identified or a plate number is received. In 2006, we responded to 132 gas drive off's and have received 57 so far on 2007.

Should you be one of those in a hurry and forget to pay, try to make contact with the store and advise them you will return. If you are too far away, provide the clerk with a credit card so they can receive payment. If you pay cash, ensure you receive and retain a receipt for a few days should there be an accusation that you failed to pay. When you pay at the pump always ensure you receive a receipt so if required you can show proper payment.

Wisconsin summers will also bring a substantial increase in traffic volume. The Patrol Division has started a concerted effort to ensure a safe driving season. We will continue our zero tolerance on seat belt use and work in partnership with the Wisconsin State Patrol on speed enforcement. We purchased two new laser speed detection devices that will allow us to capture your speed up to 1,000 meters away. Often, Deputies will get team up with the State Troopers and work together in their enforcement effort. We also work with our municipalities should they see a need for additional enforcement. Thanks for listening tnehls@co.dodge.wi.us.