



Understanding The Guidelines For Door-to-Door Solicitors

As Ohioans are presented with more opportunities to choose their natural gas suppliers, it is important to understand the rules that govern what marketers can and cannot do to get consumers' business.

Increased competition in the natural gas marketplace is one way to keep bills low. When more suppliers are available for homeowners to choose from, the chances are better that lower rates will result.

However, consumers need to keep in mind that with the growing number of independent suppliers competing for new clients, chances are that Ohioans will receive a visit from a door-to-door salesperson. If consumers are visited by a solicitor, they should know that there are rules that must be followed when asking to switch natural gas suppliers.

Ohio law clearly defines the code of conduct that natural gas salespersons must follow. If consumers receive a visit from someone claiming to represent a marketer, he/she should make sure the salesperson does the following:

- States that he/she is a representative of the marketer and NOT the utility;
- Fully explains any documents to be signed, how much it will cost, including tax, and how long the contract will be in effect; and

- Verbally explains the right to cancel and has given right-to-cancel forms.

All door-to-door salespeople must show valid photo identification issued by the natural gas supplier. Within three days of receiving a consumer's signature, the marketer is required to notify the natural gas utility of his/her intention to switch companies.

The OCC is available to assist with questions about choosing a natural gas supplier. Call toll free, 1-877- PICKOCC (1-877-742-5622) or review the "Comparing Your Energy Choices" fact sheet on the OCC Web site, www.pickocc.org, for up-to-date information about current suppliers and their offers.

The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC), the residential utility consumer advocate, represents the interests of 4.5 million households in proceedings before state and federal regulators and in the courts. The state agency also educates consumers about electric, natural gas, telephone and water issues and resolves complaints from individuals. To receive utility information, brochures, schedule a presentation or file a utility complaint, residential consumers may call 1-877-PICKOCC (1-877-742-5622) toll free in Ohio or visit the OCC Web site at www.pickocc.org.

The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel is an equal opportunity employer and provider of services

For additional information from the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel:

Call: 1-877-PICKOCC (1-877-742-5622) toll free or (614) 466-8574
Write: 10 West Broad Street, Suite 1800, Columbus, Ohio 43215-3485
E-mail: occ@occ.state.oh.us • Internet Address: www.pickocc.org