



## **AG STRANGE JOINS WITH ELECTRONIC SECURITY BOARD IN WARNING CONSUMERS TO BE WARY OF UNSCRUPULOUS PRACTICES**

(MONTGOMERY)--Attorney General Luther Strange joined with the Alabama Electronic Security Board of Licensure (AESBL) today in warning consumers to be cautious of unscrupulous solicitations and pressure tactics that may be used in an attempt to frighten people into buying or upgrading security products and services that may not be needed.

“The Alabama Electronic Security Board of Licensure licenses companies in many of Alabama’s largest counties,” said Attorney General Strange. “Consumers who are considering the purchase or installation of a security system or locks should check with the Alabama Electronic Security Board of Licensure to see if the company has a license and if any problems have been reported. Do not let anyone frighten you into making a decision before you are ready, or into buying something you may not want or need.”

The AESBL reports improper scare tactics such as: claiming that recent burglaries have occurred in the neighborhood, stating they have come to upgrade one’s security system because it is not working properly, and saying that thieves are cutting phone wires to get people to buy cellular security systems. Other unscrupulous practices include pretending to be working in conjunction with a municipality to protect citizens, and high-pressure pitches that are said to be good for that day only.

Locksmith and alarm companies in the State of Alabama are required to be licensed by the AESBL, with a few certain exceptions. Consumers should ask to see an identification badge that is from the AESBL Board and not just from the business itself, and confirm that the identification badge is for the current year. Consumers are also urged to report salespeople who cannot show the identification card proving that they are properly licensed by the Board. Under state laws and regulations, it is a class A misdemeanor to act as an alarm system servicer or installer or as a locksmith servicer or installer – or even to advertise as an alarm system servicer, installer or locksmith – without the required license.

Among the protections provided by licensure are that the employee has been subjected to a national background and fingerprint check, and that the company is subject to the jurisdiction of the AESBL which can discipline the company and mediate complaints.

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The Attorney General and the Alabama Electronic Security Board of Licensure offer the following guidelines for consumers to protect themselves:

- Ask for the AESBL ID license badge, which will have a photo and the state seal; if they cannot produce such a badge, report them.
- If you are contracted already with a security company, do not be pressured into entering an agreement with a new company without first contacting the company to which you are already under contract. All consumers are advised to call the telephone number of their current security company before agreeing to any change or upgrade to their current system by a door-to-door salesperson.
- Be particularly wary of those who try to scare you with stories of recent burglaries in your neighborhood, claims that phone lines are being cut by thieves and that you should switch to a cellular system, or falsely state that they are working in conjunction with the local government.
- Do not allow high-pressure sales pitches to force you into a decision on the spot. Watch out for false claims of a one-time free offer. Take your time to think it over, read the contract before you sign it, and check with the AESBL.

Consumers may contact the Board by calling 1-866-302-3725 or 334-264-9388, and information is available at the webpage <http://aesbl.alabama.gov/>. Consumers may also check with the Attorney General's Office of Consumer Protection by calling 1-800-392-5658.