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BEWARE OF ASPHALT PAVING SCAMS

Asphalt driveways can begin to look pretty worn and faded after a few harsh winters. And it is only natural for a homeowner to want to get the restoration done as cheaply as possible. But as you concentrate on your home repair projects this summer, beware of asphalt paving scam operators.

A traveling asphalt paving crew may notice your driveway and offer you a low-priced opportunity to revitalize it. But a little bit of caution and commonsense can help prevent serious problems.

The ability to hit and run is the key to a successful asphalt paving scam. Crews usually wander from one county or community to another offering driveway paving and/or sealing services. Representatives of the crews typically approach consumers in their yards, promising low estimates because of **leftover materials** from a completed job a few houses away or on a nearby highway project.

They may offer a lifetime guarantee, but often the quality of the material used and application is inferior, and you may soon have cracks and weeds growing through the new asphalt. Unfortunately, the paving crew is long gone by the time you discover you have a problem. It may cost you more to redo the driveway after the fresh look washes away with the next rain shower.

Another way to spot a possible scam is an offer to do the work without a written contract. Without a written contract, the original low estimate may grow to hundreds or even thousands of dollars once the work is completed. The crews insist on cash payments. If checks are accepted at all, they are cashed immediately at the nearest bank.

Use the following guidelines to protect yourself from scam artists. If you are eager to have the work done, you should insist that it be on your terms. Ask for references and check them before agreeing to have the work done. Take the crew's written estimate, and tell them you will get back to them. Get bids from established local paving companies to compare prices.

Don't let them pressure you to have the work done immediately. Notify your local law enforcement agency of any suspicious activity or to report any individual who will not leave your property when requested.

Beware of a contractor...

- 1) Who happens to be in the neighborhood with out-of-state license plates.
- 2) Who offers leftover materials at a low price.
- 3) Who doesn't offer a written contract.

If it sounds too good to be true...it probably is!