

Fake tradies

Fake tradies (also known as ‘travelling con men’) are unscrupulous tradespeople who offer to do repairs on your property but take your money and leave you with unfinished or poor-quality work.

Fake tradies often appear after disasters such as bushfires, floods and storms. They may try to take advantage of you if you are cleaning up or repairing your property, and offer to do jobs like driveway resurfacing, branch removal or roof repairs at cheap rates.

What to look out for

You should be suspicious of anyone who:

- Asks for cash up front
- Only provides their first name and mobile number
- Offers to do the work cheaply, as they have materials left over from another job
- Offers to do the work immediately as another job has just cancelled
- Knocks on your door or talks to you while you’re in your garden, offering to do the work ‘on the spot’
- Offers to drive you to the bank to get money to pay for the job
- Pressures you to accept their offer.

Fake tradies often use sophisticated tricks to scam you. Some of these tricks include:

- Flyers and business cards with fake Australian Business Numbers and business/licence registration numbers
- Fake websites.

How to protect yourself from a fake tradie

There are a number of ways you can protect yourself:

- Check their business registration/trade licence online at fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/help-centre/online-tools/home-building-licence-check or by calling **13 32 20**
- Ask for the tradesperson’s business contact number, so you can call to confirm that the tradesperson is an employee
- Ask a suspected fake tradie to leave. If they refuse, they are breaking the law and you can call the police.

Finding a reputable tradesperson

When searching for a reputable tradesperson, you should:

- Get at least three quotes from three different businesses
- Use established tradespeople who provide written quotes
- Ask your friends and neighbours for recommendations
- Avoid signing any agreement until you are ready.

Be wary of anyone offering you a ‘today only’ deal to carry out repairs for cash, particularly after disasters.



To find out more or report a fake tradie:

Stop travelling con men is a campaign to help identify travelling con men or fake tradies and protect the Australian community from misleading and deceptive conduct. All Australian state and territory consumer protection agencies are involved.

Visit the [Stop Travelling con men Facebook page](#) for more information.

If you are approached by someone you suspect to be a con man, call the national hotline on

1300 133 408

(8:30 am to 5:00 pm,
Monday – Friday)

or visit scamwatch.gov.au/report-a-scam