

Consumer Alert

CONTRACTORS STATE LICENSE BOARD

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Look for the license!

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Contractors State License Board Issues Statewide Consumer Alert Regarding Fire Protection Equipment Scam

Investigators believe consumers and businesses are victims of maintenance and installation company

SACRAMENTO – The Contractors State License Board (CSLB)

is joining the Tulare County Fire Department and Tulare County

District Attorney's Office in warning consumers and businesses

across California to be on alert for anyone coming to their

offices, stores or restaurants to service their fire extinguishers, to perform service on the hood and duct systems over cooking areas, or to conduct maintenance on automatic sprinkler systems.



Investigators believe that representatives of "American Fire Protection" (CSLB License #726110) have been using high-pressure sales tactics and deceptive methods to convince business owners to buy their service. These methods include:

- Wearing uniforms with patches similar to those worn by fire department staff, giving the impression that they are from the fire department.
- Claiming they are fire marshals and authorized to close the business if not allowed to do an inspection of the fire protection systems and make subsequent repairs.
- Claiming they are there to service fire extinguishers or hood and duct systems prior to the date those devices are to be serviced.
- Claiming they are at a business to provide service on extinguishers or hood duct systems that have previously been serviced by another company.

In many cases, when hired by the business owner, they will do sub-standard work without proper building code inspections. Investigators believe that American Fire Protection, which is based in Camarillo (Ventura County), operates throughout California, from the San Francisco Bay Area to Sacramento in the north, through the central valley counties of Tulare, Kings, Fresno, Madera, Merced and Mariposa, the San Luis Obispo coastal area and into Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange and other Southern California regions.

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A Tulare County Superior Court judge has granted a temporary restraining order, restricting company Chief Executive Officer Danny Victor Williams, Anthony David Ash and Ken Gordon Speck from:

- Impersonating governmental fire protection officials to gain admission to places of business; falsely representing that they have serviced fire protection equipment and placing inspection tags on equipment that has not been properly inspected and serviced; and
- Making untrue and misleading statements in connection with the sale or attempted sale of fire equipment contracting services.

The Tulare County District Attorney's Office is also seeking a Preliminary Injunction, as part of a civil suit filed to stop the company from engaging in "unlawful business practices," under Business and Professions Code 17200 and 17500.

"We're extremely concerned for anyone who's been pressured into using this company's services over the past four years," said CSLB Registrar Steve Sands. "Their shoddy work has put human lives in danger, and the likelihood that property will be destroyed should fire break out."

Anyone who has contracted with "American Fire Protection" is urged to either contact the Tulare County Fire Department Fire Prevention Division at (559) 747-8233, or the Tulare County District Attorney's Office at (559) 624-1054.

The Contractors State License Board operates under the umbrella of the California Department of Consumer Affairs. The CSLB licenses and regulates California's 316,000 contractors, and investigates more than 20,000 complaints against contractors annually. In fiscal year 2007-08, the CSLB helped consumers get \$35.2 million in ordered restitution.

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Photo Samples from American Fire Protection



Patches on American Fire Protection Uniforms

Inspection Tags Used by American Fire Protection



American Fire Protection Uniforms



American Fire Protection Uniform



City of Visalia Firefighter in Uniform

