

Door to Door Water Tank Sales – Please Read the Note Below to Educate and Protect Yourself

A Typical Story.....

Good Evening,

I just wanted to bring to your attention that a representative from company 'X' is currently going door-to-door in Bridlewood. She came to our home this afternoon and tried to misrepresent herself as having an affiliation with Enbridge. She strongly encouraged us to 'upgrade' our water tank to one from them for 'free' because ours was outdated, unsafe and not energy efficient. If we agreed to this fantastic deal we would 'pay a couple of extra dollars per month to save much more in the long run.' She is very convincing and pushy - wanting to look at your hot water tank right away and have you sign up for a fast installation date.

When we questioned her she finally admitted to being from a third party water tank rental provider. Under the veil of 'energy efficiency' she was trying to snag us from Enbridge into a long-term hot water tank rental agreement which would increase our monthly rates for 'only \$3/month to start' but over \$25/month thereafter. We asked for a copy of the contract but she would not provide us with one. I asked for a phone number so we could think about it and get back to her. She reluctantly gave us her cell number and told us, unless we called within 1-2 days, we were out of luck. It was a high-pressure, limited-time, 'free upgrade' offer which, according to her, Enbridge would charge us \$250 to do the same thing.

This isn't illegal, just deceptive.

Protect Yourself

The doorbell rings, you pause and ask yourself 'am I expecting someone?' When you open the door, it could be a child selling cookies or a stranger with a clipboard. We all like cookies, but beware, not everyone at the door has a sweet deal for you.

No matter what the offer is on a product or service, remember it's your doorstep and your decision. Many Ontarians have unfortunately discovered the 'deal' they signed up for includes long-term commitments, exit fees or high rental rates - especially when it comes to contracts to do with your home comfort needs such as heating and air, electricity and water heaters.

In recent months some water heater service providers have convinced homeowners to unnecessarily replace their hot water heater. Now, they have been left with expensive cancellation fees, long-term commitments and high rental rates. As your water heater provider, we feel it is our responsibility to provide you, our customers, with hot-water straight talk and reliable information to ensure you make an informed decision.

Don't Get Burned At The Door

What They May Tell You

Some door-to-door sales agents employ unscrupulous tactics when it comes to trying to make a sale. Below are examples of misleading practices some door-to-door salespeople employ.

- * Telling you that your current provider is no longer in business and they are taking over the contract and service of your water heater
- * Dressing as a technician and saying they're in the neighborhood to schedule water heater replacements
- * Implying they represent the government or a utility
- * Showing you safety bulletins implying your water heater isn't safe anymore and that you have to replace it
- * Telling you incorrectly that if your water heater is over a certain age, it's inefficient
- * Showing you pictures of water heaters cut in half to show corrosion inside, implying your water heater is in the same condition
- * Citing savings of up to 30% that only applies when switching from electric to gas
- * Describing a locked-in term as a "guarantee and maintenance plan"

What They May Not Tell You

- * Who they are working for
- * That you may be locked into a long-term contract
- * If you try to break the contract there may be high exit fees
- * That their rental rates are higher than your current provider
- * Significant energy savings may only apply if a customer converts from an electric water heater to a natural gas water heater
- * Even replacing a 15 year-old water heater will only save about \$6.30 a month in energy costs, before you even consider the cost of the water heater
- * Water heaters are designed to work for years without accumulating rust buildup
- * Water heaters are installed according to the code at the time of installation

What to Do

Don't Let Just Anyone Into Your Home

Whoever thought water heaters could be so confusing. There are other service providers who may knock on your door to suggest replacing your water heater. To help ensure you are clear on who the service provider is and what you are signing up for, we'd suggest asking the following questions before acting:

1. What company do you represent?
2. How long is the contract for?
3. Are there charges to exit the contract if I'm not satisfied with the service?
4. What is the size and experience level of your technician staff?
5. How long have you been in the water heater business?
6. Is there a call centre ready to take my call?

What you should consider before signing a contract

If you are considering signing a contract with a water heater seller ensure you have all the facts. It's important that you have the correct information so that you can make an informed decision.

If you have already signed a contract

The **Consumer Protection Act allows consumers to cancel a contract within 10 days upon receipt of the written copy of the agreement.** If you feel you have been misled, you may contact the Ministry of Small Business and Consumer Services. There is clear direction of the complaint process on the Ministry's website under 'Your Rights When You Buy at the Door'.

The link to the Ministry's website is

www.gov.on.ca/mgs/en/ConsProt/STEL02_173840.html or you can call 1-800-889-9768.

Facts About Water Heaters

A water heater is vital to your total home comfort, so it's important to understand the basics of how it works. There are a lot of myths and untruths out there about water heaters, so protect yourself and get to know your water heater!

Conventional Storage Water Heater

First, let's learn a little more about a conventional storage water heater. Basically, a water heater keeps a reservoir of hot water available at all times so that when you turn on the tap, it's ready to meet your needs. It is steel coated with a protective layer of glass. In order to heat up the water, you need energy. Your water heater gets its supply of energy from either natural gas or electricity. Whenever you use energy to heat something, some energy is lost in the process.

Sediment

Over time, small amounts of sediment or lime can accumulate at the bottom of the tank. The hot water that you use is drawn from the top of the tank, which is why your tank is largely unaffected by small sediment deposits. If you notice a rust-coloured tinge to your hot water, or feel it's taking longer to heat the water than normal, call your local service provider.

Gas Water Heaters

Depending on its size and age, a natural gas water heater can be anywhere from 45% (75 gal pre-1990) to 61% energy efficient. Newer Energy Star models are 62% energy efficient or above. Natural gas water heaters need to be vented, either to a brick-lined or metal chimney, or out the side wall with a plastic pipe.

Electric Water Heaters

You could also have an electric water heater in your home. These tanks are in the 93% energy efficient range, although the cost of the energy they use is typically more expensive. They operate differently from natural gas water heater tanks, in that recovery time is longer, and heating capacity is lower but they do not require an external vent.

Tankless Water Heaters

A tankless water heater is an option that some homeowners are interested in. These units provide continuous hot water by rapidly heating it when you turn on your tap. Consequently, hot water is available for a longer time, but it may at times be at a lower rate of flow. The energy efficiency is in the 82%+ range.

For more information, or people to call with questions visit the web at:

<http://www.yourhome.ca/homes/business/article/727149--beware-tricksters-behind-water-heater-fraud>

<http://www.burnedatthedoor.com/>

<http://www.hotwaterstraighttalk.com/>

[http:// www.directenergy.com/waterheater](http://www.directenergy.com/waterheater)