



FAKE LOCKSMITHS BARRED FROM DOING BUSINESS IN NC

Release date: 8/31/2010

Court permanently bans network of phony locksmiths, orders more than \$1.2 million in fines

Raleigh: A network of phony locksmiths who used bait and switch tactics to rip off locked out North Carolinians are permanently banned from business in the state, Attorney General Roy Cooper said today.

"Businesses that break the law and take advantage of consumers in their time of need have no business operating in North Carolina," Cooper said.

Wake County Superior Court Judge Robert Hobgood agreed today with Cooper's request to enter a [permanent injunction](#) and judgment against several locksmith companies and their owners. The court order bars the defendants, their employees, contractors and successors from offering or performing any locksmith services in North Carolina.

Named as defendants in the lawsuit are: 704 Locksmith, Inc. of Charlotte which does business in the Triangle area under several names including Raleigh Locksmith, Durham Locksmith, Apex Locksmith and Smithfield Locksmith; NC Charlotte Locksmith which does business throughout central and western North Carolina using a variety of names such as Charlotte Locksmith, Concord Locksmith, Hickory Locksmith, and Shelby Locksmith; Anna Konevsky of Charlotte, president of 704 Locksmith and NC Charlotte Locksmith; Locksmith Services, Inc. of Charlotte, which also operates as Cary Locksmith and Atlantis Locksmith; and Tamir Avraham of Charlotte, president of Locksmith Services, Inc.

Under the judgments issued by the court, the defendants have been ordered to pay a total of \$1,245,000. Avraham, 704 Locksmith, Inc., and Locksmith Services, Inc. each owe \$395,000 in civil penalties, \$5,000 each per week for every week they operated illegally in North Carolina. Konevsky owes \$60,000 in civil penalties, \$5,000 per week for each week she illegally did business in the state.

Under state law, any civil penalties collected in the case will go to support the public schools.

According to the Attorney General's investigation, the defendants do not actually employ any licensed locksmiths, but the companies have advertised and performed locksmith services anyway. The defendants have advertised online and in the yellow pages using names, telephone numbers and addresses that make their companies appear to be local.

As alleged in complaint filed by Cooper's office, North Carolina consumers have called these companies looking for a local locksmith who could let them into their home, business or car. Consumers who complained about the defendant say they were quoted one price on the phone and then charged a much higher price by

the locksmith who showed up to do the work. The defendants then usually demanded payment in cash, refusing to let consumers pay by credit card.

“Nobody likes to be locked out, but it’s even worse if the company you call for help rips you off,” Cooper said. “To avoid scams, do your homework to find a legitimate, licensed locksmith.”

To avoid falling victim to similar scams, Cooper recommends the following tips:

- Whenever possible, check out a business before you do business with them by calling the Attorney General’s Office and the Better Business Bureau.
- Locksmiths are required by law to be licensed. Before someone does work for you, ask if they’re licensed and write down their license number. Contact the [N.C. Locksmith Licensing Board](#) at (919) 838-8782 to check out a locksmith or report an unlicensed one.
- A locksmith who arrives on the scene should be wearing an identification tag issued by the Locksmith Licensing Board. If the locksmith isn’t wearing the ID, don’t do business with him or her.
- Get a price quote in writing before you agree to any work.
- For services you may need in an emergency, such as a locksmith or plumber, find a good one before an emergency happens. Ask family and friends for recommendations, check them out and then save their contact information so you’ll have it when you need it.

Consumers can call the Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division at 1-877-5-NO-SCAM to check out a company or file a [complaint](#).

Contact: Noelle Talley, (919) 716-6413

North Carolina Department of Justice / Roy Cooper, Attorney General (919) 716-6400