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NEWS RELEASE

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BEWARE: SCAMMERS EXPLOITING NEW GOVERNMENT REBATE PROGRAM TO TARGET SENIORS

Ontario homeowners—particularly seniors—are being warned about scams linked to the recent launch of government energy efficiency rebate programs.

On January 7, 2025, the Government of Ontario announced new rebate programs designed to help homeowners make energy-efficient upgrades. These programs cover rebates for:

- Windows and doors
- Insulation and air sealing
- Smart thermostats and heat pumps
- Rooftop solar panels and battery storage systems

Unfortunately, scammers are exploiting the program's launch to prey on unsuspecting seniors. Predatory HVAC and home renovation companies are aggressively using phone calls, door-to-door visits, and deceptive online ads, claiming to handle rebate applications and payments on behalf of homeowners—a promise that is entirely **false**.

“Since 2020, ACE has received thousands of phone calls from victims of scams perpetrated by salespeople from certain HVAC and home improvement companies. These scammers exploit the promise of government rebates to defraud low-income home owning seniors. We have serious concerns that this misuse will continue with the government’s new energy efficiency programs, and that seniors will once again be targeted by fraudsters looking to take advantage of them.”

— Bethanie Pascutto, Litigation Lawyer, Advocacy Centre for the Elderly (ACE)

“LIEN has been advocating for energy efficiency rebate programs for low-income Ontarians since 2004, and we applaud their implementation. These programs offer free upgrades, such as insulation, draft proofing, and smart thermostats, to eligible homeowners. However, there IS absolutely no door-to-door solicitation related to these programs. Seniors need to be aware that if someone shows up at their door uninvited, it is likely a scam. Legitimate low-income energy efficiency programs will only send delivery agents to your home if you have scheduled an appointment for an energy assessment, audit, inspection, or home visit.”

— Zee Bhanji, Stakeholder Engagement and Energy Policy Analyst, Low-Income Energy Network (LIEN)

HOW TO IDENTIFY LEGITIMATE REBATE PROGRAMS

The government’s rebate programs are managed through approved companies, ensuring a clear and secure application process to make it easy for homeowners to access the benefits.

1. **Application Process:** You must apply directly through the official program, and once approved, you can begin the work to improve your home’s energy efficiency.
2. **Approved Professionals:** Upgrades are performed by qualified, authorized contractors who ensure your home improvements meet government standards.
3. **Payment Process:** Rebates are issued only by **Save on Energy** or **Enbridge Gas**, never by private contractors or companies.

For income-eligible homeowners, two FREE upgrade programs are available:

Enbridge Gas Home Winterproofing Program

Save on Energy’s Energy Affordability Program

These programs offer fantastic benefits, including:

- **A free home energy assessment** by an authorized delivery agent.
- **Free upgrades** such as insulation, draft proofing, and smart thermostats.
- **Additional free items** like energy-efficient appliances and LED lighting through the Energy Affordability Program.
- **Professional installation** by experienced, qualified contractors.

It’s important to note that Save on Energy will never call you to solicit participation, conduct door-to-door sales, ask you to show your electricity bill, or require an inspection of your heating and cooling systems.

Authorized delivery agents only visit your home if **YOU** have initiated the process by applying directly to the program. This ensures a smooth and secure process from start to finish.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM SCAMS

Seniors, caregivers, and families should take these precautions:

1. Never answer unsolicited phone calls or allow door-to-door salespeople into your home.
 2. Avoid clicking on social media ads promoting rebates—these are often fraudulent.
 3. Verify program information through official websites or by contacting Enbridge Gas or Save on Energy directly.
 4. Report suspicious activity to local authorities or consumer protection agencies.
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HELP KEEP YOUR COMMUNITY SAFE

Seniors are frequently targeted by scams due to their perceived trust and financial vulnerability. Share this information widely with family, friends, and neighbours to help protect others in your community.

For more information on these programs, visit:

- **Home Renovation Savings Program:** <https://www.saveonenergy.ca/homerenovationsavings>
 - **Enbridge Gas Home Winterproofing Program:** <https://www.enbridgegas.com/ontario/rebates-energy-conservation/home-winterproofing-program>
 - **Save on Energy Energy Affordability Program:** <https://saveonenergy.ca/For-Your-Home/Energy-Affordability-Program>
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