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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Contact**

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## KNOW YOUR DOOR-TO-DOOR SOLICITATION RIGHTS

Sanford NC – April 25, 2016 – Under threat of litigation, the **Sanford City Council** has updated its [Peddlers/Itinerant Merchant ordinance](#). Effective immediately, the change allows residents in the city of Sanford to post a “No Soliciting” sign to prevent door-to-door sales at their homes.

Previously, the **City of Sanford** required peddlers to secure a permit and receive the occupant’s permission before going to the door of a private residence to sell or take orders for goods, wares, or merchandise. The goal was to protect residents from annoyance or interference by those who might use unscrupulous tactics, fear, or intimidation when selling door to door.

However, recent court decisions have narrowed the ability of government to regulate commercial speech, making restrictions on soliciting easy to challenge. To avoid a lengthy legal battle that would likely side with businesses that rely on soliciting, the City of Sanford has amended its ordinance.

The updated rules are as follows:

- Each person who goes door to door to take orders or sell goods, wares, or merchandise must [apply to the City of Sanford for a Peddlers/Itinerant Merchant license](#). There is a nonrefundable fee and the license runs on the fiscal year of July 1 to June 30. Solicitors must show their valid license upon request.
- Residents are allowed to post a “No Soliciting” sign on their property to prevent solicitors from knocking on their door. Any solicitor who ignores the sign will be in violation of the ordinance.
- Neighborhoods with a property owners’ association may post a “no soliciting” sign at the entrance to the neighborhood if the association has the proper authority to do so. Any solicitor who knocks on doors in the neighborhood for purpose of selling will be in violation of the ordinance.
- Any resident may ask a solicitor to leave, regardless of whether a “no soliciting” sign is posted. Peddlers who do not leave when asked are trespassing. Residents should call 9-1-1 if they feel threatened or harassed. Remember that no resident has to open the door for a stranger, including solicitors.

Residents should call the **Sanford Police Department** at 919-777-1000 to file a report if any solicitor cannot produce the Itinerant Merchant license, refuses to leave when asked, or otherwise fails to comply with the ordinance's rules. Violators will be fined \$50. After two violations, solicitors may lose their license for a period of 12 months.

The ordinance specifically applies to solicitation for the purpose of selling goods and merchandise and does not prohibit canvassing by religious groups, civic or non-profit groups, and political campaigners, which is considered free speech.

To obtain a Peddlers/Itinerant Merchant license, visit the [Business Licenses](#) section of our website, found under Billing and Collections.

For more information, contact Ebony McLean at 919-777-1144 or [ebony.mclean@sanfordnc.net](mailto:ebony.mclean@sanfordnc.net).

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