

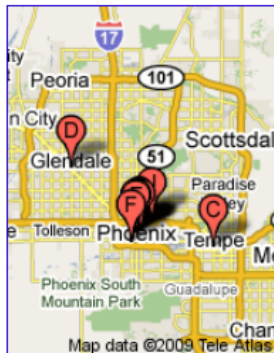
Hiring a Lock Company? Find Out If They're Lying to You Before Hiring Them

When it comes to protecting your home and business security, you want to hire a lock company you can trust. Maybe it's a local service or maybe it's the one with the great reputation, either way, more and more consumers are turning towards the internet to find that business.

The trouble is that the information presented to the consumer during their locksmith search is often wrought with false claims, errors, or erroneous information. In fact, the problem has become so prevalent that the Better Business Bureau and the Federal Trade Commission have each released consumer warnings (you can read those reports on our website's "[Knowledge Center](#)").

Let's look at an example in Phoenix taken on 04/29/09. The following picture illustrates the Local Business Listings results when searching for "Phoenix Locksmith". Of particular note, consider the first listing under "A".

Local business results for locksmith near Phoenix, AZ



- A. [Phoenix Locksmith 480-588-1926](#) - [phoenixlock.4x2.net](#) - (888) 297-8142 - [70 reviews](#)
- B. [XL Auto Locksmith In Phoenix 480-347-0263 Auto Car Lockout In Phoenix](#) - [www.valleylocksmithphoenix.com](#) - (480) 347-0263 - [28 reviews](#)
- C. [Tempe Locksmith Services](#) - [www.locksmith-usa.com](#) - (480) 478-0739 - [22 reviews](#)
- D. [Locksmith Glendale](#) - [www.qualityinn.com](#) - (623) 505-2827 - [40 reviews](#)
- E. [Millennium Locksmith in Phoenix](#) - [www.millenniumlocksmith.com](#) - (480) 299-1802 - [11 reviews](#)
- F. [Locksmith](#) - [www.bmy-locksmith.com](#) - (602) 314-1730 - [14 reviews](#)
- G. [EXPERT LOCKSMITH INC.](#) - [www.expertlocksmith-phoenix.com](#) - (602) 273-0088 - [10 reviews](#)
- H. [Locksmith](#) - [www.bmy-locksmith.com](#) - (602) 254-6397 - [6 reviews](#)
- I. [Phoenix Locksmith- Locksmith in Phoenix, AZ \(602\) 412-3466](#) - [www.phoenixlocksmith.us](#) - (602) 412-3466 - [More](#)
- J. [Phoenix Locksmiths](#) - [www.phoenix-locksmiths.com](#) - (602) 325-5506 - [1 review](#)

At first glance, this looks like a local company, and a good one to boot. They have a local number, with 70 customer reviews. If you click on the name of the company, you will be taken to their website. If you dial the local number (the 480 extension) you will be taken to their call center. However, if you are really observant, you will have notice that the phone number listed far off to the right is an 888 number, and if you click on their reviews, you will see the following:

[Write a review](#)

★★★★★ **yummy steak!** - sober1 - Oct 8, 2008

... This place had excellent service and ambience. It is a little noisy for intimate conversation but the food was delish and I know have a new favorite creme brulee place! ...

Was this review helpful? [Yes](#) - [No](#)

[More from Kudzu.com »](#)

Frommer's Review - - Mar 23, 2009

In business for decades, Durant's has long been downtown Phoenix's favorite after-work watering hole. Although especially popular with the old guard, this classic bar has caught on ...

Was this review helpful? [Yes](#) - [No](#)

[More from Frommers.com »](#)

★★★★★ **Best Steakhouse in Phoenix!!!** - A TripAdvisor Member - Mar 16, 2009

Durant's never disappoints. Best steaks in Phoenix. Great martinis and wine list as well. Can't ask for more. This is a classy place that I hope will be around forever. ...

Was this review helpful? [Yes](#) - [No](#)

[More from Tripadvisor.com »](#)

The reviews are for a local steak house! I haven't used this company, and for all I know they could be great. However, the company has exploited a problem in Google Maps that allowed them to hijack the steak house reviews – all in an attempt to get you to call them.

How Did They Do It?

Google maps combines listings with the same address into a single listing. Fraudulent locksmith and lock companies are noting the addresses for popular locations (such as hotels and restaurants). Then in Google they create a local listing using that address. Google combines these listings into one and the locksmith company has instant credibility by having a high number of reviews.

Why Does it Work?

1) Many people don't click to read the reviews. They either follow the link which takes them directly to the company's website or they call the number shown in the link (the first big bold number, not the little non-local number) without checking the company out.

2) People trust Google. They get a result for Phoenix Locksmith and they assume the "local listings" are really local companies in Phoenix. However, most of the time the address listed is a bogus address. Many companies go as far as to post a phony "physical" shop in hundreds of locations. This way, no matter what city is searched, their listing comes up first.

You may be asking yourself, what's the harm? Sadly these companies go on to rip off the consumer by overcharging or charging for services that aren't necessary. Consumers find themselves paying several hundred dollars for jobs that shouldn't cost more than seventy or so. Furthermore, not only do these companies take current business from real local, mom and pop shops, but they take all of the repeat business too. Who is going to trust a locksmith company after they've been ripped off by one?

How to Protect Yourself

There are simple ways you can protect yourself when hiring companies found on Google Maps.

1) Ask the company if they are physically located at the address they list. If you get any answer other than, "Yes," walk away. Many times they claim the address is for a call center or storage facility. Do NOT believe these claims. I was recently on the phone with one such company, standing in front of an empty lot they claimed to be their call center! No locksmith business needs more than one location for a call center (and certainly not an empty lot) and we do not carry access inventory because of the cost of buying parts.

2) Check the reviews! These companies want you to click their weblink or call the number they list in big bold text. They don't want you to check the details of their listing (the address and the reviews). Are the reviews for the actual company? Have they all been written on the same day? In Google, always click the on the name of the reviewer to see how many different reviews they have posted. ACME Locksmith has seen one reviewer **write over 700 different reviews** for various versions of the same company all over the U.S. It's one thing if a customer posts a single review to several sites as a way of making it known; it's another to fabricate reviews.

3) Use companies registered with the Better Business Bureau. If they're not there, and they don't have a good rating, look elsewhere. Search the BBB for company ratings in your location and then in ANY location. The crooked companies post all over the US and though they might not have been reported in Phoenix, you'll likely find "F" ratings in other locations they service.

4) You can go to www.findalocksmith.com for a list of registered locksmiths in good standing with the Associated Locksmiths of America.