

Avoid and Report Disaster Fraud

Release Date: Mars 13, 2023

LAKE MARY, Fla. – A survivor recently reported getting a text that their “federal government check in the amount of \$2800 has been disbursed”. The text instructed the survivor to visit a link and provide personal information for FEMA to verify. This is a scam. Scam attempts can be made over the phone, by mail or email, text or in person. FEMA is not providing any financial assistance in the amount of \$2,800.00. If you have applied for disaster assistance, FEMA will notify you of its decision. The agency may also contact you if it needs additional information to process your application. This may come in the form of a letter. In some instances, you may receive a phone call. Review your FEMA letters carefully.

Go online to DisasterAssistance.gov to create an online account with FEMA. Be extremely careful when clicking any links.

Here is a list of other *possible scams* that may target Hurricane Ian survivors:

Identity Theft

- Disaster survivors should be aware con artists and criminals may try to apply for FEMA assistance using names, addresses and Social Security numbers they have stolen from survivors.
- If a FEMA inspector comes to your home and you have not filed a FEMA application, your information may have been used without your knowledge. Tell the inspector you did not apply for FEMA assistance.
- If you did not apply for assistance but receive a letter from FEMA, please call our Helpline at 800-621-3362 any day between 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. ET.

If you believe you are the victim of a contracting scam, price gouging or other fraudulent activity, contact local law enforcement and report it to the Office of the Attorney General by calling 1-866-9-NO-SCAM (1-866-966-7226) or visit myfloridalegal.com. To file a fraud complaint, go online to Scam Report (myfloridalegal.com). or contact the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at www.ftc.gov/complaint.



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Telephone calls

- **FEMA will only reach out if you have already applied for assistance.** If you are contacted by someone asking you to apply for FEMA assistance or if you question someone's intent, contact your local law enforcement agency.

Housing inspectors claiming to represent FEMA

- Be cautious if somebody asks for your nine-digit application number. A FEMA inspector will not ask for this. They already have it in their records and may provide it to you to confirm they are interacting with the correct person.
- FEMA inspectors never ask for or confirm banking information.
- Ask the inspector to show you their identification badge. Federal and contracted employees always wear an official government badge to identify themselves.

Someone comes to your home without a FEMA photo ID

- Do not let someone into your home who claims to be a FEMA employee but does not have a FEMA photo ID. All FEMA representatives carry a laminated photo ID.

Fake offers of local or federal aid

- Don't trust someone who asks for money. Federal and local disaster workers do not solicit or accept money. FEMA and staff from the Small Business Administration never charge for inspections or help in filling out a disaster assistance application.
- Don't believe anyone who promises a disaster grant and asks for large cash deposits or advance payments in full.

Charitable giving

- A list of reputable charities that are approved by the Better Business Bureau's "Wise Giving Alliance" can be found at www.give.org.

Rental listings

- The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has information on how rental scams work. For instance, scammers know finding the right apartment or vacation rental can be hard work, and a seemingly good deal is hard to pass up when



you need a place to stay. Learn more at www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0079-rental-listing-scams.



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