

Beware of Contractor Fraud: Go Local, Do Your Research

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SANTA FE, New Mexico – FEMA and the New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (NMDHSEM) caution Chaves County residents impacted by the Oct. 19-20 Storm and Flooding to be aware of post-disaster fraud and scams. Attempts to scam residents can be made over the phone, by mail or email, through the internet or in person. It is important to remain alert, as con artists are creative and resourceful. If an offer sounds too good to be true, it should be questioned.

FEMA does not license or certify contractors. FEMA does recommend using a local contractor, someone who is known in the community. Out-of-town scam artists may be the first to arrive at your front door after a flood. Do your research to find out if a potential contractor is licensed to work in New Mexico, contact the New Mexico State Licensing Board for Contractors at rld.nm.gov/about-us/public-information-hub/online-services or call them at **(505) 476-4500**.

Be Alert to Potential Scams

Fake or unlicensed contractors may try to take advantage of the situation to scam residents affected by the storm and flooding. As insurance settlements, grants and loans put homeowners in a position to pay for work on their homes, residents need to be sure the people they hire are authorized to do the work, will complete it and will do a good job. FEMA does not pay contractors directly. Homeowners will be reimbursed by FEMA for eligible expenses.

Be Aware of These Contractor Scams and Warning Signs:

- Door-To -Door Solicitations
- High Pressure Sales or Scare Tactics
- Demand for Cash, Unusually Large Down Payments or Advanced Full Payment
- Special Deals or Extremely Low Bids
- Verbal Agreements, No Written Contract



FEMA

- Out of State, No Permanent Place of Business, No Insurance
- Inadequate References

Being aware of these important clues can save you from substantial financial and emotional loss. Report suspicious activity of this kind to your local police department, the FEMA Disaster Fraud Hotline at **866-223-0814**, or the Office of the Attorney General Consumer Protection Section in New Mexico:

nmag.gov/consumer-protection-1.aspx or submit a complaint by visiting the New Mexico Office of the Attorney General's (nmag.gov) page: secure.nmag.gov/ecs. You can also report the suspected fraud to the Better Business Bureau at **(505) 346-0110** or visit bbb.org/local-bbb/bbb-serving-new-mexico-and-southwest-colorado.

For the latest information on New Mexico's recovery from the wildfires and flooding, visit fema.gov/disaster/4795. Follow FEMA Region 6 on social media at x.com/FEMARegion6 and facebook.com/femaregion6.

