

FEMA Advises Disaster Applicants to Beware of Rumors, Misinformation, and Fraud

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WASHINGTON – The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is raising awareness that Hurricane Irma disaster survivors, and their friends and family, should be alert for false rumors, scams, identity theft, and fraud. Although many Americans are working hard to help their neighbors now, during chaotic times, some will always try to take advantage of the most vulnerable.

To dispel some of the false rumors circulating on the internet and social media, FEMA has a dedicated website to address some of the most common themes. Remember, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Visit [FEMA's Hurricane Rumor Control page](#) to get the most accurate information from trusted sources.

Here are a few guidelines to protect yourself, or someone you care about, from disaster fraud:

- Federal and state workers do not ask for, or accept, money. FEMA staff will never charge applicants for disaster assistance, home inspections, or help filling out applications. Stay alert for false promises to speed up the insurance, disaster assistance, or building permit process.
- In person, always ask to see any FEMA employee ID badges. FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance teams may be in impacted communities providing information and assisting survivors with the registration process or their applicant files.
- A FEMA shirt or jacket is not proof of identity. All FEMA representatives, including our contracted inspectors, will have a laminated photo ID. All National Flood Insurance Program adjusters will have a NFIP Authorized Adjuster Card with their name and the types of claims they may adjust.



- If you are unsure or uncomfortable with anyone you encounter claiming to be an emergency management official, do not give out personal information, and contact local law enforcement.
- If you suspect fraud, contact the National Center for Disaster Fraud's hotline at 1-866-720-5721, or email the organization at disaster@leo.gov. You can also report fraud to the Federal Trade Commission at www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov. Learn more about the National Center for Disaster Fraud at www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud.
- In Florida, disaster-related fraud information is available on the State Attorney General's Office website at www.MyFloridaLegal.com, or by calling the office at 1-866-966-7226.

Hurricane survivors are also encouraged to notify local authorities to cases of lawlessness or violence, especially in hurricane shelters. **In an emergency, call 9-1-1.** For other cases:

- In Florida, report suspicious/criminal activity to 1-855-352-7233.
- In Puerto Rico, report suspicious/criminal activity to the Puerto Rico Police by calling 787-343-2020, or by calling your [local FBI office](#) at 787-754-6000.
- In the U.S. Virgin Islands, report suspicious/criminal activity to:
 - St. Thomas - 519-631-1224
 - St. John - 340-693-8880
 - St. Croix - 340-778-4950

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FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from and mitigate all hazards.



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