Beware of Fraud and Scam Artists

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Survivors should be aware that con artists and criminals may try to obtain money or steal personal information through fraud, scams, or identity theft. In some cases, thieves try to register with FEMA using names, addresses and Social Security numbers they have stolen from survivors.

- **Phony property inspections:** Be on alert if somebody asks for your nine-digit registration number. FEMA home inspectors will never ask for this information. They already have it in their records. No government disaster assistance official will call you to ask for your financial account information. If you doubt a FEMA Representative is legitimate, call the FEMA helpline at 800-621-3362 to report the incident. Housing inspectors NEVER charge a fee to inspect your property.
- **Phony building contractors:** FEMA does not hire or endorse specific contractors to fix homes or recommend repairs. A FEMA housing inspector's job is to verify damage. Always hire a reputable engineer, architect or building official to inspect your home. An unethical contractor may create damage to get work. When in doubt, report any suspicious behavior to your local authorities.
- **Phony FEMA Representatives:** Scam artists may pose as government officials, aid workers, or insurance company employees. Ask to see ID badges. All FEMA representatives carry an identification badge with a photograph. A FEMA shirt or jacket is not proof of identity. Federal and local disaster workers do not solicit or accept money. Don't trust anyone who offers financial help and then asks for money or personal information. Do not disclose information to any unsolicited telephone calls and e-mails from individuals claiming to be FEMA or federal employees. FEMA will not call you unless you have called FEMA first or applied for assistance. FEMA representatives will ask for social security and bank account numbers when you apply and may ask for it again after you apply (Make sure they are validated by proper identification badge or reference registration number). Be cautious when giving this information to others who ask for it.
- **Bogus pleas for post-disaster donations**: Verify legitimate solicitations by asking for the charity's exact name, street address, phone number and

webpage. Call the charity and confirm that the person asking for funds is a genuine employee or volunteer. Don’t pay donations with cash. Request a receipt with the charity’s name, street address and phone number.

- In addition to contacting local authorities for reports of scams, fraud, and identity-theft, please contact FEMA’s toll-free Disaster Fraud Hotline at 866-720-5721.

For the latest information on Illinois recovery from storms and floods, visit fema.gov/disaster/4676. Follow FEMA on Twitter at FEMA Region 5 (@femaregion5) / Twitter and at facebook.com/fema.

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FEMA’s mission is helping people before, during, and after disasters.