

Protect your identity: Be alert to fraud and scams after a disaster

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CHARLESTON, W.Va.— After a natural disaster, it is important to protect your identity against fraud and identity theft. In some cases, criminals may try to get information by pretending to be disaster workers. Scam artists may try to apply for FEMA assistance using names, addresses, and Social Security numbers they have stolen from people affected by a disaster.???

Keep these things in mind to protect your identity and stay informed:??

- Federal and local disaster workers do not ask for or accept money. Don't trust anyone who offers help and then asks for money.??
- FEMA will only call or e-mail you if you have contacted FEMA first or registered for assistance. If you receive suspicious e-mails or phone calls, you can call the FEMA Helpline at 1-800-621-3362 to verify if a FEMA call or e-mail is legitimate.??
- Always ask to see I.D. FEMA personnel will always have an official identification badge. A FEMA shirt or jacket is not proof of identity.???
- Do not offer any personal information, including your Social Security number and bank information, unless you are speaking with a verified FEMA representative.???
- Be on alert if someone asks for your 9-digit FEMA registration ID, which you will receive when you apply for disaster assistance through FEMA.???



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- Stay tuned to trusted local media for updates from local officials on disaster fraud and scams.??
- After you apply for FEMA assistance, a home inspection may be necessary. FEMA inspectors will make an appointment before coming to your house. They may verify your identity using your 9-digit registration number. FEMA inspectors will also not ask you for your Social Security number. FEMA inspectors do not ask for money.
- FEMA does not hire or endorse specific contractors to make home repairs. A FEMA inspector's job is to verify damage.?? ?

To?report?scams,?fraud,?and?identity-theft?contact:??

- Toll-free?Disaster?Fraud?Hotline?at?1-866-720-5721 or email StopFEMAFraud@fema.dhs.gov.
- The?Department?of?Justice's?National?Center?for?Disaster?Fraud:? justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form??
- When?in?doubt,?report?any?suspicious?behavior?to?your?local?authorities.??

For more information on West Virginia's disaster recovery, visit emd.wv.gov, [West Virginia Emergency Management Division Facebook page](#), www.fema.gov/disaster/4884 and www.facebook.com/FEMA.

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



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