

Beware of Scammers Pretending to be Disaster Workers

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ATLANTA – 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 apply for FEMA assistance using names, addresses and Social Security numbers they have stolen from survivors.

Survivors should keep the following information in mind while FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance teams, housing inspectors and other officials are on the ground.

- Don't trust anyone who asks for money. Federal and local disaster workers do not ask for or accept money. FEMA and U.S. Small Business Administration representatives never charge applicants for disaster assistance, inspections or help in filling out applications.
- Don't believe anyone who promises a disaster grant in return for a large cash deposit or other payments in full.
- Be wary of unexpected phone calls or visits to your home from people claiming to be FEMA housing inspectors or people claiming they work for FEMA. The person might ask for your Social Security number and income or banking information. FEMA representatives will have a laminated badge and your FEMA application number.
- Protect the privacy of your nine-digit FEMA case/application number. Legitimate FEMA housing inspectors will NOT ask for this information.



- Don't give your banking information to a person claiming to be a FEMA housing inspector. FEMA inspectors are never authorized to collect your personal financial information.

Fraudulent building contractors

- Use licensed or verified local contractors with reliable references.
- To find licensed, certified North Carolina contractors, check the state's licensing board at nclbgc.org/license-search/.
- Don't pay more than half the costs of repairs in advance.
- Demand that contractors detail the job you expect them to do and ask them to give you a written estimate.

Report the Scam. Reporting helps protect others. Based on the type of scam you may see, contact the appropriate agency.

- If you believe you or a loved one are the victim of a scam or identity theft, report it immediately to your local police or sheriff's department, or contact the North Carolina Department of Justice online at ncdoj.gov/file-a-complaint/ or toll-free by calling 1-877-5-NO-SCAM .
- If you suspect fraudulent activity involving FEMA, you can report it to the FEMA Fraud Branch at: *Email:* StopFEMAFraud@fema.dhs.gov, *Fax:* (202) 212-4926 or write to:
FEMA Fraud and Internal Investigation Division
400 C Street SW Mail Stop 3005



FEMA

Washington, DC 20472-3005

- If someone is using your personal information to open new accounts, make a purchase or get a tax refund, report it at [IdentityTheft.gov](https://www.identitytheft.gov).
- You can file a complaint with the North Carolina Licensing Board for General Contractors if you have been scammed or have a dispute with a business regarding a transaction.
- Reporting to the Better Business Bureau Scam Tracker can help others become aware of scams in your local area.

For more information on North Carolina's disaster recovery, visit www.ncdps.gov/ and www.fema.gov/disaster/4617. You may also follow FEMA on www.facebook.com/fema and Twitter [@FEMARegion4](https://twitter.com/FEMARegion4).

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

