



## Gloucester Department of Community Engagement

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### Be Aware of Post-Disaster Fraud Practices

The following are examples of common post-disaster fraud practices and important information to help avoid becoming a victim:

**Fraudulent phone calls or home visits:** Individuals falsely claiming to be from FEMA or a government agency who do not have proper photo identification.

- Survivors will be asked to provide their Social Security number and banking information only when registering for FEMA assistance. They should never give this information to contractors.
- Ask to see the inspector's identification badge. A FEMA or U.S. Small Business Administration shirt or jacket is not proof of someone's affiliation with the government. Federal employees and contractors carry official photo identification.
- FEMA inspectors will already have applicants' nine digit registration number.
- FEMA inspectors will never require banking or other personal information.
- If in doubt, survivors should not give out any information.

**Fake offers of federal aid:** A phone or in-person solicitor promises to speed up the insurance, disaster assistance or building-permit process for a fee. Other scam artists promise a disaster grant and ask for large cash deposits or advance payments in full.

- Federal workers do not solicit or accept money.
- FEMA and SBA staffers will never charge applicants for disaster assistance, inspections or for assisting individuals fill out applications.

**Fraudulent building contractors:** Disasters also attract fraudulent contractors who offer to begin work immediately and request a cash advance payment. When hiring a contractor:

- Residents should only use licensed local contractors who are backed by reliable references and get written estimates from at least three contractors that include the cost of labor and materials.
- Residents should insist that contractors carry general liability insurance and workers' compensation. If they aren't insured, you may be liable for accidents that occur on your property.
- Don't pay more than half the costs of repairs upfront.

**Dishonest pleas for post-disaster donations:** Dishonest solicitors may play on the emotions of disaster survivors. These solicitations may come by phone, email, letter or face-to-face.

- Residents should verify legitimate solicitations by asking for the charity's exact name, street address, phone number and website address, then phone the charity directly and confirm that the person asking for funds is an employee or volunteer.
- Residents should not pay donations with cash.
- Residents should request a receipt with the charity's name, street address, and phone number.

If you suspect someone is perpetrating fraud, call the FEMA Disaster Fraud Hotline at 866-720-5721 or your local police department.

For more information on Indiana's flood recovery, visit [www.fema.gov/disaster/4363](http://www.fema.gov/disaster/4363) or the [@FEMARegion5](https://twitter.com/FEMARegion5) Twitter account.