



FEMA

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News Release

Stopping Fraud after Hurricane Michael: Call the Fraud Hotline at 866-720-5721

ATLANTA - Across the city streets and county roads of central and southwest Georgia, neighbors are helping neighbors in the aftermath of Hurricane Michael. But as recovery continues, The Georgia Emergency Management & Homeland Security Agency (GEMA/HS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) caution survivors to be aware of potential fraud from scam artists, identity thieves and other criminals.

One example of how criminals can exploit survivors is by sending fraudulent communications through email or social media and by creating phony websites designed to solicit contributions. Tips may be reported 24/7 to the National Center for Disaster Fraud at: **866-720-5721**. Or, email disaster@leo.gov.

Here are some suggestions to keep information, property and personal finances safe:

Legitimate vs. imposter

- Like all FEMA field personnel, inspectors can be identified easily by their photo identification and the FEMA logo on their shirts/vests. Always ask inspectors to show you their identification badge.
- A FEMA inspector will never ask for:
 - Social security number
 - Nine-digit FEMA registration number
 - Banking or credit card information
 - Any type of money, property or financial records

Avoid fraudulent building contractors

- Use licensed or verified local contractors backed by reliable references from previous clients. Ask specific questions about the date, type and price of the work previously done to ensure you are speaking with a previous client.

(MORE)

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- Georgia's Secretary of State offers a free online site to verify if a general or residential contractor is licensed with the state.
- Never pay more than half the costs of repairs in advance.
- Stipulate that contractors provide a detailed account of the proposed work, warranty and all guarantees in writing.
- If you suspect fraud, you can also file a complaint online at the Georgia Attorney General's office at www.consumer.ga.gov/consumer-services/filing-a-complaint

Trusted sources of information

- FEMA has a rumor control page that is continually updated to dispel false information about disaster recovery from Hurricane Michael:
www.fema.gov/hurricane-michael-rumor-control

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FEMA's mission: Helping people before, during, and after disasters