

Jersey County Sheriff's Office Reminds Flood Victims of Potential Fraud, Scam Artists

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
June 13 2019 9:56 AM

SCAM

ALERT

JERSEY - The Jersey County Sheriff's Office today issued a reminder to flood victims to be on guard for suspicious activity involving potential fraud, scam artists and other criminals who prey on disaster survivors.

The Jersey County Sheriff's Office listed these examples of common post-disaster fraud activities to help avoid becoming a victim:

Fraudulent phone calls or home visits:

Individuals may falsely claim to be from FEMA or another agency, but do not have proper identification. To guard against this, know that:

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 is not proof of someone's affiliation.

FEMA inspectors will already have an applicants' nine-digit FEMA registration number when they arrived for inspection.

FEMA inspectors will never ask for 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 may promise 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 for disaster assistance, inspections, etc.

Fraudulent building contractors

Disasters also attract fraudulent contractors who offer to begin to work immediately and request a cash advance payment.

When hiring a contractor:

Residents should only use licensed local contractors who have reliable references.

Residents should insist contractors carry liability insurance and workers' compensation coverage.

Dishonest pleas for donations

Dishonest solicitors play on the emotions of disaster survivors. These solicitations may come by phone, e-mail, 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 organization 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 organization's name, street address, and phone number.

The Jersey County Sheriff's Office said residents who suspect they may be victims of fraud can contact the office at (618) 498-6881.