

Be Aware of Post-Disaster Fraud and Scams

Release Date: November 18, 2024

FEMA and the New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (NMDHSEM) caution residents to be aware of post-disaster fraud and scams.

Residents of Chaves County affected by the severe storm and flooding should be aware that con artists and criminals may try to obtain money or steal personal information through fraud or identity theft after a disaster. In some cases, thieves may try to steal and use your name, address, Social Security number and banking information, and try to get FEMA assistance for themselves.

- If a FEMA inspector comes to your home and you did not submit a FEMA application, your information may have been used without your knowledge to create a FEMA application. If so, **please inform the inspector that you did not apply for FEMA assistance** so they can submit a request to stop further processing of the application.
- If you did not apply for assistance, but receive a letter from FEMA, **call the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362**. The helpline will submit a request to stop any further processing of that application.
 - If you do wish to apply for FEMA assistance after stopping an application made in your name without your knowledge, the helpline will assist you in creating a new application.

Scams

FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance (DSA) teams, housing inspectors and other officials are working in areas impacted by the severe storm and flooding. They carry official identification badges with photo IDs. FEMA employees will also have access to your FEMA application number. FEMA and U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) representatives never charge applicants for disaster assistance, inspections or help in filling out applications.



- There are three types of fraud often perpetrated on survivors:
 - An individual claiming to be FEMA knocks on your door asking for personal identification information. All FEMA personnel canvassing neighborhoods **will wear FEMA vests and carry an official FEMA ID.**
 - An individual calls you to confirm your personal information or banking information. If a FEMA specialist calls, they will confirm your registration number received the day you applied for FEMA assistance. **Do not** speak to anyone without that confirmation.
 - A contractor claims to be at your home for a damage inspection, then asks for payment. **FEMA inspections are always free.**
- Attempts to scam residents can be made over the phone, by mail or email, through the internet or in person. It is important to remain alert, as criminals are creative and resourceful.
- Ways to report scams:
 - Report fraud cases to local law enforcement.
 - Contact the FEMA Disaster Fraud Hotline at 866-720-5721. You can also email StopFEMAFraud@fema.dhs.gov
 - Submit a complaint by visiting the New Mexico Office of the Attorney General's (nm DOJ.gov/get-help/)

Contact the Better Business Bureau at (505) 346-0110 or visit www.bbb.org/scamtracker



FEMA