

Nebraskans: GUARD AGAINST FRAUD

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LINCOLN, NE – Survivors of the March 9 to April 14 floods and storms applying for assistance from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) are advised to exercise caution with personal information during the disaster recovery period. With an increased charitable and federal presence, scam artists and identity thieves may attempt to take advantage of survivors.

Common post-disaster fraudulent practices include over the phone and in person requests for sensitive information and fake offers of federal aid.

The Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) urge survivors to safeguard against fraud by heeding the following recommendations:

- **Ask to see ID badges.** All FEMA representatives are required by law to present a laminated photo ID. A FEMA hat, shirt or jacket is not proof of identity.
- Federal workers do not solicit or accept money. FEMA staff never charge applicants for disaster assistance, inspections or help to fill out applications. FEMA inspectors verify damage, but do not involve themselves in any aspect of the repair nor recommend any contractor.
- **Verify a Home Inspection** by requesting to see the FEMA employee's identification badge or by calling the FEMA Helpline at 1-800-621-3362 to confirm an appointment. The job of a FEMA housing inspector is to verify



damage. Inspectors do not hire or endorse specific contractors to fix homes or recommend repairs. They do not determine eligibility for assistance.

- **FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance teams** may be in your community providing information and assisting people in registering with FEMA or updating their files. The teams coordinate their activities with local emergency managers and make local law enforcement agencies aware of their presence. The teams always consist of at least two people and may include employees of Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) as well as FEMA. They will always be wearing FEMA or NEMA shirts and laminated photo IDs. Disaster Survivor Assistance teams never ask for or accept payment for their services.
- Verify charitable solicitations by asking for the charity's exact name, street address, phone number and web address. Phone the charity directly and confirm that the person asking for funds is an employee or volunteer before donating.
- If you suspect fraudulent activity or question the validity of a request for identifiable information, please report the individual(s) to local law enforcement, dial Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) at 402-471-7421, call FEMA Disaster Fraud Hotline 866-720-5721 or visit www.protectthegoodlife.nebraska.gov/file-consumer-complaint

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

For disaster updates from the State of Nebraska, visit Nebraska's website at NEMA.Nebraska.gov. You can also follow [@NEMAtweets](https://twitter.com/NEMAtweets) on Twitter and www.facebook.com/nema.page on Facebook. Follow FEMA online at www.fema.gov/disaster/4420.



Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has faced discrimination, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-3362 or 800-462-7585 (TTY). Multilingual operators are available.

The U.S. Small Business Administration is the federal government's primary source of money for the long term rebuilding of disaster-damaged private property. SBA helps businesses of all sizes, private nonprofit organizations, homeowners and renters fund repairs or rebuilding efforts and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property. For more information, applicants may contact SBA's Disaster Assistance Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955. TTY users may also call 800-877-8339. Applicants may also email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov or visit SBA at [SBA.gov/disaster](https://www.sba.gov/disaster).

