

# Look Out for Disaster Fraud, Scams

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**MONTGOMERY, Ala.** – When disasters occur, it is common for some people to try to take advantage of survivors by posing as official disaster aid workers trying to obtain personally identifiable information.

Federal and state workers never ask for, or accept, money and always carry identification badges. No fee is required to apply for, or to receive, federal disaster assistance. There is never a fee for FEMA home inspections.

Owners/applicants may be especially vulnerable to phony housing inspectors claiming to represent FEMA. Ask to see the inspector's identification badge. Housing inspectors have each applicant's nine-digit registration number. Inspectors will call you on the telephone to make an appointment.

There may be occasions when a FEMA representative must contact you to verify personal data. You should request a FEMA identification number from the caller. If you are unsure of the caller's identification or you are suspicious of someone claiming to be a housing inspector sent by FEMA, call the **FEMA Helpline** at **800-621-3362** or (TTY) **800-462-7585**.

Criminals exploit survivors by sending fraudulent communications through email or social media and by creating phony websites designed to solicit contributions. **Inspectors will not contact you via email.** A list of reputable charities that are approved by the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance is available at [Give.Org](https://www.give.org).

During each disaster, it's important to stay tuned to local media and trusted local, state and federal social media for current updates about ongoing disasters and tips on disaster fraud prevention.

Scam attempts can be made over the phone, by mail or email, text or in person. Alabama survivors of Hurricane Zeta should be aware of fraud and scams and report suspicious activity or potential fraud from scam artists, identity thieves and other criminals to FEMA.



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- Call the **FEMA Helpline** at **800-621-3362** or (TTY) **800-462-7585**.
- Email the FEMA tip line: [StopFEMAFraud@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:StopFEMAFraud@fema.dhs.gov).
- Email the National Center for Disaster Fraud: [Disaster@Leo.gov](mailto:Disaster@Leo.gov).
- Call your local police or sheriff's department.

FEMA also recommends you monitor your credit report for any accounts or changes you do not recognize. If you discover someone is using your information, you will need to take additional steps, including filing a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission through its website **IdentityTheft.gov**.

If you believe you or a loved one has become a victim of a scam or identity theft, report it immediately to your local police or sheriff's department, or contact the office of the Alabama Attorney General:

- Office Main Number: **334-242-7300**
- Consumer Protection Hotline: **800-392-5658**
- Office of Victim Assistance: **800-626-7676**
- <http://www.ago.state.al.us/Page-Consumer-Protection>

For more information on Hurricane Zeta in Alabama, visit [www.fema.gov/disaster/4573](http://www.fema.gov/disaster/4573).



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