

Ohio Tornado Survivors: Beware of Disaster Fraud

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COLUMBUS - Fraudulent activity typically increases after disasters. Con artists may try to get money from you or ask for your personal information to try and steal your identity.

Survivors of the March 14 tornadoes in Auglaize, Crawford, Darke, Delaware, Hancock, Licking, Logan, Mercer, Miami, Richland and Union counties should be aware that fraud and scams can occur anytime. If your home or personal property was damaged in the recent storms, be careful when giving out your personal information.

Remember, FEMA, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), and other federal and state disaster workers will never ask for money and never require payment in any form.

Fraudulent Applications

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 this happens, 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. If you use video relay service, captioned telephone service or others, give FEMA your number for that service. The Helpline will submit a request to stop any further processing of that application.

Other Disaster-Related Scams

FEMA teams, housing inspectors and other officials will be working in areas affected by the March 14 tornadoes. **Always ask to see I.D.** FEMA personnel



always have an official identification badge.

Be careful of unexpected phone calls or visits to your home from people claiming to be FEMA housing inspectors or people claiming they work for FEMA. FEMA inspectors will already have your FEMA application number, but they may ask you to verify personally identifiable information by phone. If you're unsure whether a FEMA call or visit is legitimate, contact the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362 to verify.

Don't give your banking information to a person claiming to be a FEMA housing inspector. FEMA inspectors do not collect or ask to confirm your personal financial information.

Take Action

If you believe you are the victim of a scam, report it immediately to your local police or sheriff's department.

If you have knowledge of fraud or scams involving FEMA's disaster relief operations, you can report this to FEMA:

- Email: StopFEMAFraud@fema.dhs.gov
- Phone: 866-223-0814
- Mail: 400 C Street SW, Suite &SW-1009, Mail Stop 3005, Washington, DC 20472-3005.

To report and get help recovering from identity theft, visit [IdentityTheft.gov](https://www.identitytheft.gov).

For even more information about the disaster recovery operation in Ohio, visit www.fema.gov/disaster/4777.

