



How to Avoid Getting Scammed

The City of Pembroke Pines urges residents to be careful of opportunists, con artists and unlicensed Public Adjusters in the aftermath of a storm/hurricane. Avoid being scammed and be suspicious if a contractor:

- Demands cash or full payment up front for repair work
- Has no physical address or identification
- Asks you to sign something you have not had time to review
- Wants your personal financial information to start the repair or lending process

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) mobile team members can **be easily identified by their federal photo identifications and FEMA clothing.**

Housing inspectors contracted by FEMA may also be inspecting damage sustained by survivors who have already registered with FEMA. When FEMA-contracted inspectors arrive at a home, **they will display official photo identification. If the photo identification is not displayed, it is important to ask to see it.** This helps prevent fraud.

Please keep in mind **FEMA employees do not solicit or accept money** from disaster survivors. Many legitimate disaster assistance employees may visit your property such as insurance agents, damage inspectors, and FEMA and U.S. Small Business Administration staff. **FEMA does not have "approved" contractors.** Beware of contractors who say they are affiliated with FEMA.

In addition, all legitimate contractors must carry insurance. Ask for proof of liability and workers' compensation coverage and then verify it by calling the Division of Worker's Compensation at 800-742-2214. Don't rush into signing a contract, and it is recommended that you get three written estimates.

To report scams or suspicious contractors, call the State of Florida Department of Financial Services, a Division of Investigative & Forensic Services, Fraud Tip Hotline at 800-378-0445, the Consumer Helpline at 877-693-5236 or their Public Assistance Fraud Hotline at 866-762-2237. Or, call the Pembroke Pines Police Department.

Survivors who sustain damage or losses caused by a hurricane in Broward County can apply for assistance online at www.disasterassistance.gov/ or by calling FEMA's

helpline at **800-621-3362** for voice, 711 and video relay service.

Report damage to your agent or insurance company as soon as possible. If you make emergency repairs, be sure to document them, keep all receipts, and take photographs of damage before and after a repair.

Please refer to the following links for additional information to protect you and your property:

- [Broward County Search for Contractor License](#)
- [Florida Department of Business & Professional Regulation](#)
- [Florida Division of Corporations](#)
- [Consumer Helpful Tips](#)
- [How to Select a Contractor](#)
- [Report Unlicensed Contractor Licensing Activity](#)
- [Find or Verify an Arborist](#)
- [Report Unlicensed Tree Trimming Activity](#)
- [Broward County Call Center](#)
- [Florida Office of the Attorney General](#)
- [Broward County Hurricane Irma Updates](#)

For more information, please visit www.ppines.com/hurricane.