



**JEFFERSON
COUNTY
LONG TERM
RECOVERY
GROUP**

DON'T BE A VICTIM OF CONTRACTOR FRAUD

Disasters create chaos and bring on a lot of stress and uncertainty. A disaster will draw many people to our area to help impacted households. Unfortunately, a disaster also attracts dishonest people.

Don't get scammed by crooks who want to take advantage of you!

People posing as reputable contractors will show up in your neighborhood or at your door to offer construction services. Some of these people will have dishonest intentions and try to take advantage of your vulnerable situation. Disaster survivors want their homes repaired quickly, but there is always a shortage of construction help after a storm. This can be frustrating for households who want to "feel normal" again. Storm chasers and scammers know this. They will make you believe they have come to save the day. **Don't be a victim!**

IDENTIFY STORM CHASER SCAMS WITH THESE **RED FLAGS:**

People who go door-to-door looking for business but can't provide references or credentials, do not have a local storefront office location, have out-of-state license plates on their vehicle, provide no business card or one with very little identifying information, has an untraceable business or personal profile when searched on the internet, or there is no record of them through Better Business Bureau.

People who request **CASH ONLY.**

People who do not provide an official contract with a detailed scope of work, project cost, or job timeline. Verbal agreements mean nothing. If it's not in writing, it did not happen!

People who pressure you to make a quick or on-the-spot decision. Try to get more than 1 bid if possible.

Watch what you sign. Read everything carefully. Look for unclear or misleading language.

Anyone that gives you an "uneasy" feeling.

People who want a large payment up front or offer a discount if you pay up front with cash. After Harvey, many people paid "cash up front" to contractors for supplies, but never saw the contractor or their cash again.

People unwilling to provide a proper receipt when you exchange payment. Anytime you pay money for a service, the business will provide you with a receipt if they are reputable. Never turn over cash to anyone without receiving a receipt that documents the transaction, what it is for and displays the name of business and their information.

**CHECK A BUSINESS THROUGH BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU
409-835-5348**

If a contractor makes promises that are "too good to be true," there is probably something wrong. If you pay cash up front, there's always a chance you may never see that contractor or your money again. It is always better to research a contractor and the business they represent before agreeing to do business. Always ask hard questions to test the legitimacy and honesty of the person or business. Do your best to use a local business that has an internet presence, a storefront business address, trusted references by people you know, and businesses that have a positive record with Better Business Bureau Serving Southeast Texas.