

# DON'T FALL VICTIM TO A SCAM, STATE AND FEDERAL OFFICIALS WARN

**NEPTUNE, N.J.** – New Jersey residents can avoid falling victim to a scam if they ask questions, request photo identification and read the fine print, according to the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Fraud is a major concern when disasters strike, and the damage caused by Hurricane Irene has left many homeowners, renters, and business owners vulnerable to fraudulent offers of help.

A few reminders to residents:

FEMA-contracted inspectors always call to schedule an appointment before visiting a home, always wear a photo ID and always know the applicant's name and registration number. **Inspectors never charge a fee for help.**

Those seeking federal assistance should **never reveal personal information** if the person or organization making the request cannot provide identification showing the state, federal or voluntary agency serving the disaster.

When contracting for home repairs, homeowners should always use licensed local contractors, and ask for and investigate their references. Furthermore, be sure to ask for a written estimate from at least three contractors, including labor and materials, and read the fine print before signing a contract.

**The Department of Homeland Security has established the Fraud Prevention Hotline at 1-800-323-8603 for reporting fraud.**