

Houston Rumor Control  
August 31, 2017

RUMOR CONTROL

**Rumor:** There are reports of a flyer titled FEMA Field Inspectors needed ASAP and states Earn \$4-5K per week call (214) 284-XXXX for instructions on how to apply between the hours of 9:00am – 11:00am up to August 31, 2017.

✓ This report is TRUE. (August 29/Updated 8/30).

FEMA is hiring field inspectors under a pre-existing contract to assist with surge capacity of field inspections.

Rumor: There are reports stating FEMA is looking to employ 1,000 people offering to pay \$2,000/week for 90 days and the phone number to call is 888-776-XXXX.

XX This report is FALSE. (August 29/Updated 8/30)

Learn more about [official FEMA job opportunities](#) to help with the response and review a list of trusted [non-profit organizations who are active in disaster response](#).

**Rumor:** There are reports individuals must file a flood insurance claim before Friday, September 1 because a new Texas law goes into effect that day and all claims filed after Sept. 1 would be negatively impacted.

XX This rumor is FALSE. (August 30)

✓ •Texas State “House Bill 1774,” passed by the 85th Texas Legislature, does not affect flood insurance policies or claims. Flood insurance is provided through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), which was created by Congress through the passage of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968. The NFIP is a federal program subject to federal law, so this new Texas state law will have no impact on NFIP policyholders.

For information on how this legislation will impact other types of insurance claims in Texas, please reach out to the Texas State Insurance Commissioner’s office.

NFIP flood insurance policyholders with flood damage should file their insurance claims as soon as possible to begin their recovery process, but there is no benefit or penalty in filing before or after September 1, 2017. Learn more about how to file your flood insurance claim.--

**Rumor:** There are reports Texas residents are being told (via robo-call) their flood premiums are past due and in order to have coverage for Hurricane Harvey they need to submit a payment immediately to a website.

XX This rumor is FALSE. (August 30)

✓ •Insurance companies and agents selling flood insurance policies do not use this process to communicate with customers about their flood insurance policies. In fact, if your payment is past due, your insurance company will send you several pieces of mail 90, 60, and 30 days before the policy expires.

If you receive a call regarding your flood insurance policy:

- Hang up the phone. Don't press 1 to speak to a live operator or any other key to take your number off the list. Just hang up.
- Then contact your insurance agent or insurance company immediately to verify the information.
- Or call 1-800-638-6620 if you have a policy with NFIP Direct

Visit our [resource page on how to file your flood insurance claim](#).

**Rumor:** There are rumors undocumented immigrants cannot go to a shelter because they will be reported to ICE or CBP.

XX This rumor is FALSE. (August 27)

✓ •U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) have stated that they are not conducting immigration enforcement at relief sites such as shelters or food banks. In the rare instance where local law enforcement informs ICE of a serious criminal alien at a relief site that presents a public safety threat, ICE will make a determination on a case-by-case basis about the appropriate enforcement actions. More information is available at U.S. Customs and Border Protection and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) joint statement. The Federal Government strongly encourages all persons to follow the guidance of local officials and seek shelter regardless of their immigration status.

✓ •Most shelters are managed by local communities, the Red Cross, and other voluntary agencies. American Red Cross' humanitarian mission is to feed, shelter, and provide other forms of support without regard to race, religion, or citizenship status. The Red Cross will not ask people to show any form of identification in order to stay in their shelters. In order to receive some Red Cross services, such as meeting with a caseworker to facilitate disaster recovery, they will need to verify a person's pre-disaster address. For people who don't have government-issued identification, the Red Cross can usually do this through alternative means, such as a copy of a utility bill.

**Rumor:** There may be reports that FEMA charges for services such as damage inspections or contractor repairs.

XX This is FALSE. (August 27).

✓ •Follow the below steps as scam artists may pose as government officials, aid workers, charitable organizations, or insurance company employees:

- Ask for identification and don't be afraid to hang up on cold callers.
- Contact government agencies using information posted on their websites or in other official sources.
- Don't sign anything you don't understand or contracts with blank spaces.

**Rumor:** There are reports of people impersonating Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) special agents in Texas.

✓ •This report is TRUE. (August 29).

✓ •Real Homeland Security Investigations officials wear badges labeled "special agent," which members of the public can ask to see and verify. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers with Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) also wear badges labeled with ERO Officer. They also carry credentials with their name and organization. Members of the public who receive such visitors should ask to see these properly labeled badges, and their credentials.

In addition, these officers and special agents would be conducting hurricane relief operations with other local law enforcement agencies. Also note that during Hurricane Harvey relief efforts, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is not conducting immigration enforcement operations in the affected area. To report suspicious activity or individuals you believe are impersonating ICE officials, members of the public should immediately contact ICE toll free at 866-347-2423.