

Beware of Hurricane Harvey Repair and Clean-Up Scams

AUSTIN – In the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, Attorney General Ken Paxton today warned those in affected areas to guard against contracting scams and offered tips to safeguard against unscrupulous individuals looking to take advantage of vulnerable Texans.

“Unfortunately, scams involving contractors failing to perform work they were paid to do are not uncommon following a disaster such as Hurricane Harvey,” Attorney General Paxton said. “I encourage hurricane victims in Texas to take the extra time to evaluate and hire the right contractor to avoid being swindled. The consumer protection hotline will remain open and we stand ready to assist anyone who has been preyed upon after this disaster. Please call my office at 800-621-0508 to report scams.”

Attorney General Paxton’s Consumer Protection Division offers the following tips to avoid contractor fraud during the clean-up and rebuilding process:

- Contact an insurance adjuster to get an estimate of the damage and repair cost.
- Don’t sign a check from your insurance company over to a contractor.
- Only do business with licensed or bonded contractors or builders. Get multiple estimates.
- Be cautious of contractors who solicit services door-to-door, especially those that are unfamiliar or from out of town and try to pressure you into signing a contract on the spot.
- Get the salesperson’s license plate number.
- Consult the Better Business Bureau to ensure you are working with a trustworthy business.
- Ask for referrals from people you trust and for references from contractors.
- Get more than one estimate on work, so you know if you’re being overcharged. Don’t be rushed into signing a contract and never pay in full up-front for promised work.
- Consider paying by credit card to avail yourself of additional protections.
- Get everything in writing, including the terms of any warranty, and keep a copy of all documents.

Additional information to help Hurricane Harvey victims protect against disaster-related scams is available on the attorney general’s website at <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/cpd/disaster-scams>. Consumers can report suspicious or fraudulent activity by filing a complaint online at <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/cpd/file-a-consumer-complaint>.