



Warning to North Carolina Citizens: Beware of Illegitimate Contractor Scams in the Aftermath of Hurricane Helene

To Permitting and Inspection Departments:

Hurricane Helene, which has caused significant damage across western North Carolina to homes, businesses, and infrastructure, has left many in need of urgent repairs and assistance. In partnership, the North Carolina State Board of Examiners of Electrical Contractors, the North Carolina State Board of Examiners of Plumbing, Heating, and Fire Sprinkler Contractors, and the North Carolina Licensing Board for General Contractors advise and urge the citizens of WNC to be vigilant and take necessary precautions when hiring contractors for repair and reconstruction work to avoid becoming further victimized by scam artists posing as legitimate contractors.

We know that in times of disaster, there are scam artists looking to take advantage of storm victims. The last thing we want is for someone who has been a victim of the disaster to be victimized a second time by a fraudulent contractor.

Our Boards would like to remind everyone that licensed general contractors, licensed electrical contractors, and licensed plumbing, heating, or fire sprinkler contractors have met specific requirements necessary to be issued a license in the State of North Carolina.

We ask you to help us by reminding North Carolinians of the following:

- Be wary of door-to-door repair solicitations or people who demand deposits or payments in cash.
- Contact your insurance company for guidance before beginning any work. Do not make a large deposit or upfront payment in full.
- Require a written contract that details the work to be done, materials to be used, a payment schedule that is based on completion of work and a timeline for work to be completed. *A licensed general contractor is required to list their license number on all contracts.*
- Do not make payments before the work specified on the payment schedule is completed.
- Do not make payments for any work not specified in the contract unless it has been submitted and approved in writing by you before the additional work begins.
- Request a Certificate of Insurance from the contractor and verify it is valid by contacting the party who issued it.

- Contact the local building inspections and permitting office to determine if permits are required to assure building code compliance. If permits are required, confirm with the permit office that the contractor has acquired them before construction begins.
- Before making final payment, evaluate the completed work and require the contractor to confirm that all subcontractors and suppliers have been paid to eliminate potential liens on your property.
- You can always verify whether the contractor is licensed to perform the specific work by visiting the Board websites or calling the Board offices:
 - **North Carolina Licensing Board for General Contractors**
www.nclbgc.org Office # 919-571-4183
 - **North Carolina State Board of Examiners of Electrical Contractors**
www.ncbeec.org Office # 919-733-9042
 - **North Carolina State Board of Examiners of Plumbing, Heating, and Fire Sprinkler Contractors**
www.nclicensing.org Office # 919-875-3612
- Contact local law enforcement if you suspect you are being scammed by a contractor.
- Contact the NC Attorney General's office if you suspect you are being price gouged by the contractor at ncdoj.gov or call toll free within North Carolina at (877)-5-NO-SCAM or (877)-566-7226.

For additional information on disaster recovery programs, individual assistance resources, or hurricane recovery donations, please visit the North Carolina Department of Public Safety website: ncdps.gov