



FEMA

Sept. 28, 2010
Joint Field Office: New Berlin, WI
DR-1933-WI MA001
State News Desk: 608-242-3239
FEMA News Desk:
262-780-3271
202-431-7453 (After hours)

Media Alert

BEWARE OF TEXT MESSAGES AND OTHER DISASTER-RELATED FRAUD

NEW BERLIN, Wis. – The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) have been made aware of fraudulent text messages being sent to Grant and Milwaukee County residents who are recovering from severe storms, flooding and tornadoes July 20-24. The reported text message tells recipients they have a message waiting from FEMA, and instructs them to push the star button on their cell phone to obtain information about federal disaster assistance. A subscription of \$9.99 per month will be charged to the owner of the cell phone if the star button is pushed.

FEMA does not send text messages. Individuals should not respond to any text messages claiming to be from FEMA.

Disaster recovery can inspire fraudulent actions in various forms.

- FEMA services never cost money. Beware of phone calls from people who say they can help with your FEMA application for a fee.
- If you have applied with FEMA and you receive a call, ask the caller to verify your FEMA registration number; a FEMA employee will be able to confirm the number.
- **Never give your Social Security number or bank account information to someone who calls or visits you. This information is only collected by FEMA.**
- Call the police or sheriff's department to verify any contractor who solicits you.
- Check contractors' State of Wisconsin registration and proof of insurance.
- Never rely on verbal commitments. Obtain warranties and written contracts including start and completion dates and details about scheduled work and required materials.
- Contact the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection if you have questions. You may call 1-800-422-7128 or e-mail: DATCPHotline@wi.gov to learn if a complaint is filed about a contractor. For more information, log onto www.datcp.state.wi.us.
- Report fraud by calling the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General's Hotline at **800-323-8603** or e-mail DHSOIGHOTLINE@dhs.gov.

More

BEWARE OF TEXT MESSAGES AND OTHER DISASTER-RELATED FRAUD, PAGE 2

FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.

###

Follow FEMA online at twitter.com/fema, www.facebook.com/fema, and www.youtube.com/fema. Also, follow Administrator Craig Fugate's activities at twitter.com/craigatfema. The social media links provided are for reference only. FEMA does not endorse any non-government websites, companies or applications.