



## Following Hurricane Matthew, Protect Yourself from Unlicensed Contractors and Price Gouging

Most contractors in the building industry are honest but disasters attract scam artists. Use reliable, licensed contractors. Homeowners' insurance policies may not pay a claim if you contract with an unlicensed contractor! Do not mistake a Business Tax Receipt issued by the Tax Collector's Office as a Contractor's License! *Be aware of unlicensed contractors that:*

- ♦ *Say they are licensed but cannot provide a copy of their license or license number.* To verify if your contractor is licensed locally, in Brevard County call the Licensing Office at 321-633-2058, option 4, then option 6, or visit the county's website at [www.brevardcounty.us/licensing](http://www.brevardcounty.us/licensing) and select "Find a Licensed Contractor." In Seminole County, call the Building Division at 407-665-7050 for verbal verification. You can also search for state certified contractors by clicking on the "Verify a License" tab at [www.myfloridalicense.com/dbpr](http://www.myfloridalicense.com/dbpr).
- ♦ *Cannot pull permits or get inspections done.* Unlicensed contractors will tell you a permit isn't necessary or ask YOU to obtain it! Call the Building Department in Brevard County at 321-633-2072, option 1, or 407-665-7050 in Seminole County to determine whether a permit or inspection is required.
- ♦ *Do not have proper insurance coverage.* If the contractor is not insured, the homeowner may be liable for accidents that occur on the property. Ask for proof of insurance!
- ♦ *Often request a large cash down payment before the work begins and doesn't put the contract in writing.* Insist on a written contract which clearly states all the tasks to be performed, all associated costs and the payment schedule. Do not sign completion papers or make the final payment until the work is completed to your satisfaction.

Don't allow anyone to bully you or force you into making a quick decision!

The Department of Business and Professional Regulation licenses more than 20 types of professions and can be reached via telephone at 850-487-1395 or via the internet at [www.myflorida.com/dbpr](http://www.myflorida.com/dbpr). The bitterness of poor quality remains long after the sweetness of lower prices is forgotten!

The Attorney General's Price  
Gouging Hotline is Activated

(866) 9-NO-SCAM

Attorney General Pam Bondi activated Florida's price gouging hotline as a result of Hurricane Matthew. State law prohibits extreme increases in the price of essential commodities such as food, ice, gas, hotels, lumber and water during the declared state of emergency. Anyone who suspects price gouging should report it to the Attorney General's Office by calling 1-866-9-NO-SCAM.