



Southwestern Insurance Information Service

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# News Release

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## INSURERS SAY BEWARE OF SCAM ARTISTS

**(AUSTIN, TX) People suffering damage to their homes and businesses a result of the storms which swept across Austin Tuesday evening were warned today to be aware of unscrupulous contractors ready to take advantage of storm victims, according to Sandra Helin, public affairs director of Southwestern Insurance Information Service, and insurance industry trade group.**

**"In disasters where losses range from \$75- \$100 million, scam artists posing as contractors are often ready to take advantage of the misfortunes of others," she said.**

**"Most contractors are reputable and willing to provide references of those for whom they have performed work in the past," she added. "Getting repair work done to damaged roofs and fences can be a positive experience if people use building contractors with a history of quality work."**

*For Additional Information:*

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**“Ask for references from contractors’ satisfied customers and if there is any warranty being performed make sure you receive the agreement in writing.”**

**"Speak with your insurance claim representative before making any firm commitments for repair," she suggested. "Experienced claim people can be invaluable in these types of situations."**

**Helin recommended getting proof of licensure and a written estimate from contractors and get all guarantees, warranties and promises in writing.**

**"This kind of information could be important to consumers as the threat of more storms in central Texas today is a possibility," she said.**

**"Be suspicious of a repair contractor who accepts only cash payments or asks you pay the entire amount up-front," he said. "A small down-payment may be necessary but don't make the final payment until the work is completed to your satisfaction."**

**"A very unpleasant experience can be avoided by following some time-tested rules which have been effective in other areas of the Texas where severe weather has taken place," she concluded.**

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