

HOME BUILDERS LICENSURE BOARD WARNS AGAINST HOME REPAIR FRAUD IN THE WAKE OF CENTRAL AND SOUTH ALABAMA STORM AND TORNADO DAMAGE

***Governor's Disaster Declaration allows law enforcement to charge unlicensed
homebuilders with a felony***

(MONTGOMERY) – In the wake of recent severe storms and tornados, the Alabama Home Builders Licensure Board cautions homeowners of the potential for scams, fraud and price gouging during post-storm damage cleanup, repair, and rebuilding. The Home Builders Licensure Board warns Alabamians to be on the lookout for fraud as they hire contractors to repair storm damage and purchase needed items.

In the wake of tornados and severe weather on Sunday, January 25, 2026, Governor Ivey added Geneva, Houston and Montgomery Counties to the Emergency Declaration for nineteen North Alabama counties impacted by winter weather. Under the emergency declaration, unlicensed homebuilders caught taking advantage of homeowners may be charged with a felony under the Aggravated Home Repair Fraud statute. Unlicensed homebuilding is a class A misdemeanor, but when there is an emergency declaration, the crime may be enhanced to a felony.

The Home Builders Licensure Board encourages homeowners to use only licensed home builders and roofers and to avoid being taken advantage of by unscrupulous operators.

A state homebuilders license is required when the cost of the job is more than \$10,000. However, consumers are encouraged to seek out licensees of the Board even if the scope of the work is less than \$10,000. A roofer license is required if the works is simply replacing a storm-damaged roof and the cost of the job is more than \$2,500. Executive Director, J.R. “Chip” Carden, cautions homeowners, who experience damage as a result of severe storms and emphasizes the importance of the consumer knowing about the potential problems of contracting for homebuilding and storm repairs with unlicensed contractors. “Do your homework,” Carden advises. “Call any references the builder gives you and check with the Board to confirm if a builder is licensed and in good standing. Don’t be in a rush. A bad decision now can make a difficult situation even worse.”

The Home Builders Licensure Board outlines steps consumers should take when hiring a contractor.

- Ask if they are licensed. Ask to see the card! The HBLB license is a paper or digital, credit card-sized license. Consumers can check on a licensure status by calling 1-800-304-0853, or by visiting www.hblb.alabama.gov.
- Ask for and check references, especially if the builder makes unsolicited contact with you or is from out-of-town.

- Make sure quotes and contracts are in writing. Under state law, licensed homebuilders must use a written contract. Make sure it includes the contractor's full name, address, telephone number, a description of the work to be performed, starting and estimated completion dates, and the total cost of the job.

Carden encourages residents, "to be cautious and patient. Work with your insurance company, check to make sure contractors are licensed, ask a lot of questions, and if you believe a contractor is not in the area for the right reasons, call law enforcement."

Consumers may also report concerns of alleged fraud or price gouging to the Attorney General's Office for investigation. To fill out a complaint online, visit www.alabamaag.gov and look for the "consumer complaint" link. You may also dial our Consumer Interest Division toll-free, 1-800-392-5658."

The Home Builders Licensure Board will work with local law enforcement and prosecutors in the impacted counties to charge and criminally prosecute anyone unlicensed and taking advantage of fellow Alabamians who sustained damage to their homes during the recent severe weather.

For information about home repair licensing and potential fraud, contact the Home Builders Licensure Board, 445 Herron Street, Montgomery, Alabama 36104, (334) 242-2230 or 1-800-304-0853 or www.hblb.alabama.gov.

##