

**Steve Marshall**  
Alabama Attorney General



October 10, 2018

For More Information, contact:

Mike Lewis (334) 353-2199

Joy Patterson (334) 242-7491

Page 1 of 2

## **Attorney General Steve Marshall, Home Builders Licensure Board Warn Against Home Repair Fraud in the Wake of Hurricane Michael**

(MONTGOMERY) – Attorney General Steve Marshall and the Alabama Home Builders Licensure Board are warning consumers to be wary of home repair fraud that may occur in the wake of Hurricane Michael.

The Home Builders Licensure Board maintains an official list of licensed residential homebuilders for the state and urges hurricane victims to check this before doing business with a homebuilder or remodeler. The Board's website ([www.hblb.alabama.gov](http://www.hblb.alabama.gov)) contains a wealth of information to help protect Alabama's consumers from dishonest and unqualified contractors.

The state homebuilders and remodelers 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.

“It is bad enough for people to suffer the devastation left by a hurricane, without being caused further harm from those who would commit home repair fraud,” said Attorney General Marshall. “It is important that consumers be mindful that unscrupulous people may seek to take advantage of their misfortune. To those who suffer damage, we urge you to take precautions for your protection, and to those who would take advantage of this disaster, we warn that home repair fraud is a serious crime that will not be tolerated”

Executive Director J.R. “Chip” Carden cautions homeowners who experience damage as a result of Hurricane Michael, emphasizing how important it is for the consumer to know about the potential problems of contracting for homebuilding and remodeling with unlicensed contractors. “Do your homework,” Carden advises. “Call any references the builder gives you, and check with the Board to check 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.”



Attorney General Marshall and the Home Builders Licensure Board outlined steps consumers should take when working with a builder:

- **Ask if they are licensed. Ask to see the card!** The HBLB license is a credit card-sized license – a sample is listed on HBLB’s website. You may check on a builder’s license status by calling 1-800-304-0853, or by visiting [www.hblb.alabama.gov](http://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.
- **NEVER make a full payment or substantial down payment up front. Do not make a final payment until you are satisfied and all subcontractors have been paid.** If they tell you that more money is needed in advance, be wary.
- **Ask for proof of insurance**, including workers compensation and general liability.

For information 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](http://www.hblb.alabama.gov).

If consumers have a concern or feel they may have been victimized by home repair fraud, they may report this to the Attorney General’s Consumer Interest Division by calling toll-free 1-800-392-5658, visiting the Attorney General’s website to file a complaint <https://ago.alabama.gov/ConsumerComplaint>, or by writing to 501 Washington Avenue, Montgomery, Alabama, 36130.