



# SHERIFF

## SEMINOLE COUNTY

### News Release

#### **SCSO warns residents to beware of unlicensed contractors and price gouging scams**

Seminole Co., Fla. (Oct. 8, 2016) – As the damage caused by Hurricane Matthew is assessed, the Seminole County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) is warning residents and business owners to beware of unlicensed contractors and price gouging scams.

Price gouging occurs when, during a declared state of emergency, there is a **significant discrepancy** in the pre-storm price of a product or service and the amount charged to consumers post-storm. This applies to hotel and housing rentals, and the sale of lumber, ice, water, generators and other essential supplies. Price gouging is illegal and the Florida Office of the Attorney General will investigate all alleged incidents.

Many homes and business across Seminole County suffered storm-related damages and those affected may seek the assistance of qualified contractors to assist with needed repairs.

Below is some critical information to remember when hiring a contractor:

- Beware of "handymen" or anyone who spontaneously approaches you and offers to perform repairs.
- Only do business with reputable contractors licensed by the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR). Contractor licenses can be verified at [www.MyFloridaLicense.com](http://www.MyFloridaLicense.com).
- Research the company and ask for references. Check with the [Better Business Bureau](http://Better Business Bureau) to see if there are any prior complaints against the business.
- Get a written estimate from several contractors.
- Beware of contractors who claim to be fast and cheap. This could result in the use of inferior materials, poor workmanship, or unfinished projects.
- Never pay cash for home repairs or improvements.
- Be sure to always keep receipts and copies of all paperwork.

Citizens are encouraged to report instances of price gouging and contractor fraud to the Attorney General's Office online at [www.myfloridalegal.com](http://www.myfloridalegal.com) or by calling 1-866-9-NO-SCAM.

#### **For more information contact:**

Kim Cannaday ([kcannaday@seminolesheriff.org](mailto:kcannaday@seminolesheriff.org))

(407) 665-6978 - desk

(407) 402-3319 - cell

or

Sgt. Celines Rios ([crios@seminolesheriff.org](mailto:crios@seminolesheriff.org))

(407) 665-6983 - desk

(407) 474-5193 - cell

###