



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Charles J. Fuschillo Jr.

## Senator Fuschillo Informs Residents to Avoid Becoming Victims of Contracting Scams in Wake of Hurricane Irene

CHARLES J. FUSCHILLO JR. August 31, 2011

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With many residents having to make repairs to their homes following the damage caused by Hurricane Irene, Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. (R-Merrick) is reminding residents how they can protect themselves from becoming victims of contracting scams.

“Many residents suffered damage to their homes which will require a contractor to fix. While most contractors are reputable and qualified professionals, there are some dishonest individuals who will try to take advantage of others in their time of need. By following a few simple steps, you can help protect yourself from becoming a victim of a contracting scam or fraud,” said Senator Fuschillo.

Senator Fuschillo offered residents the following tips to protect themselves when hiring a contractor, which are provided by the New York State Attorney General’s office and the New York State Division of Consumer Protection:

- **Identify the Full Home Repair Project**- Prepare a comprehensive list of all work to be completed and be specific.

- **Shop Around**- Interview multiple contractors. Contact at least three contractors and get written estimates for your repair. Insist upon specific time lines detailing start and completion dates, as well as specific descriptions of the work and materials, including brands, model numbers and other identifying information, along with the price.

- **Know What Permits are Needed**- Even though a qualified contractor should be aware of the necessary permits and inspections, you should know them as well and also ask who is responsible for obtaining them. Check with your local building department before beginning a project.

- **Get References and Check Them**- Ask friends and neighbors for names of contractors. Examine the completed project, ask if they are satisfied with the results. Get references from the contractor and speak directly to former customers. Check the contractors accreditation with the Better Business Bureau by visiting <http://welcome.bbb.org/>

- **Get Proof of Insurance**- If a worker is injured or damage is caused on your property, you could be held liable if your contractor does not have the required insurance

- **Check Licenses**- Both Nassau and Suffolk Counties require home improvement contractors to be licensed. You can check to see if a contractor is licensed by contacting the Nassau County Office of Consumer Affairs at 516-571-2600 and the Suffolk County Office of Consumer Affairs at 631-853-4600

Keep in mind that the law gives you three days to cancel a home improvement contract. Cancellations must be made in writing and should be sent to the contractor by certified mail, return receipt requested.

Residents who would like more information about how to protect themselves from contractor scams can contact the Attorney General's office at 1-800-771-7755 or through the

Internet at [www.ag.ny.gov](http://www.ag.ny.gov), as well as the New York State Division of Consumer Protection at 1-800-697-1220 or online at [www.nysconsumer.gov](http://www.nysconsumer.gov). Residents can also call Senator Fuschillo's office at 516-882-0630.

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