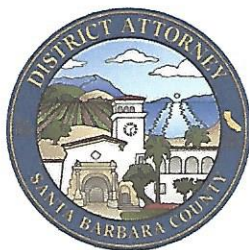


OFFICE OF THE  
**DISTRICT ATTORNEY**  
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

**JOYCE E. DUDLEY**  
District Attorney



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*Joyce E. Dudley*

APPROVED BY JOYCE E. DUDLEY, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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\*\*\*\*\* PRESS RELEASE \*\*\*\*\*

**Fraudulent Claims Related to the Thomas Fire and Mudslides**

District Attorney Joyce E. Dudley announced today that with the engagement of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) assistance there now exists the possibility of additional scams. In the recent past, the Napa and Sonoma County District Attorneys' Offices received several reports from residents whose personal identifying information, including their social security numbers, had been used to file a fraudulent FEMA application. Some of those residents reported that they attempted to apply for FEMA assistance, only to find that someone had already applied under their name. While other of those residents, who had not filed applications for assistance, reported that FEMA-affiliated inspectors came to their homes to ask about their applications.

According to District Attorney Dudley, "Santa Barbara County residents should be aware that I have confirmed that FEMA will not send inspectors to your residence unless you have filed an application for assistance. FEMA inspectors will not collect personal identifying information or bank account information at your residence, (nor will they ask for, or accept payment of any kind). This information will only be requested when a person fills out the application online, at a Local Assistance Center, or via the FEMA hotline, (820) 621-3362. All FEMA employees and contractors will have federally-issued photo identification badges, which you should request to see. If an individual shows up at your home to conduct a FEMA inspection and you have not filed an application for assistance, FEMA requests that you immediately contact law enforcement and report it to the Department of Homeland Security, Office of the Inspector General at (800) 323-8603 or [www.oig.dhs.gov](http://www.oig.dhs.gov). If you attempt to file an application for assistance, but find that someone has already filed an application in your name, FEMA requests that you call the FEMA Office of the Chief Security Office at (866) 223-0814 or report at [FEMA-OCSO-Tipline@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:FEMA-OCSO-Tipline@fema.dhs.gov). Contacting FEMA as soon as possible may prevent payment to the individual responsible for the fraud. You can find more information at [www.disasterassistance.gov](http://www.disasterassistance.gov), [www.fema.gov/disaster-fraud](http://www.fema.gov/disaster-fraud), or at the National Center for Disaster Fraud hotline, (866) 720-5721. FEMA will refer the report to the local FBI office for investigation."

District Attorney Dudley further stated, "If you become a victim of this scam, you may also be a victim of identity theft and should also report this crime to your local law enforcement agency."

Additionally, District Attorney Dudley reminds the people of Santa Barbara County to be vigilant in responding to any crimes committed by thieves who attempt to profit from our recent natural disasters. Such thieves could engage in a variety of crimes including: illegal price gouging, charitable solicitation fraud and contractor fraud. If you suspect you have been a victim of a crime of this nature, please report this activity to your local law enforcement agency.

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