




GREGORY D. TOTTEN
District Attorney

NEWS RELEASE

www.vcdistrictattorney.com

Twitter: @VenturaDAOffice

Contact: Tony Wold
Senior Deputy District Attorney
Telephone: (805) 662-1735
E-mail: Tony.Wold@ventura.org
Approved: JLM. 
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POST-DISASTER SCAM ADVISORY

VENTURA, California – District Attorney Gregory D. Totten warned today that county residents should exercise increased vigilance against scams designed to exploit residents impacted by the Thomas fire.

The District Attorney recommends the following tips to avoid becoming a victim:

- Scammers posing as insurance company representatives may call homeowners with an option to pay an increased premium over the phone to expand coverage options for possible smoke damage, or to pay their deductible in the same manner. Insured individuals are advised to contact their insurance companies directly regarding any offers related to their insurance coverage. Only accept information from trusted sources.
- Exercise caution regarding unsolicited clean-up, repair, or construction scams. These scams are initiated door-to-door in impacted neighborhoods. They may involve demands for upfront payment or deposits, which are then pocketed while the promised work is never completed. Instead use only licensed contractors. You can verify a contractor's license at

<http://www.cslb.ca.gov/>. If a contractor claims necessary work is covered by your insurance company, first call your insurance company to confirm. Consider using contractors recommended by your insurance company for any needed work and obtain more than one estimate. Also consider only using contractors with a local business location.

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The Ventura County District Attorney's Office is the public prosecutor for the county's 850,000 residents. The office employs approximately 280 employees including attorneys, investigators, victim advocates, and other professional support staff who strive to seek justice, ensure public safety, and protect the rights of crime victims.

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