



NEWS RELEASE

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HUDGENS ISSUES CONSUMER WARNINGS ABOUT REPAIR RIP-OFFS

Atlanta -- Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner Ralph Hudgens warns homeowners eager to get their lives back to normal to beware of unreputable contractors who may be price gouging.

“We have already begun receiving calls from consumers complaining about the high price of tree removal,” said Hudgens. “Thousands of Georgia’s homeowners were victims of last week’s snow and ice storms; they don’t deserve to now become victims of storm pricing.”

Hudgens offered the following advice to consumers hiring contractors and working to settle claims with their insurance company:

- Deal only with licensed and insured contractors. Consumers stand their best chance of getting the most out of their insurance if they work with approved contractors.
- Be wary of builders or contractors who go door-to-door selling their services, especially those who are not known in your community.
- Don’t rush into signing a contract. Get written estimates from at least three firms. Ask contractors if there is any charge for an estimate before allowing them into your home. Don’t automatically choose the lowest bidder. Get a copy of the final, signed contract.
- Beware of fly-by-night outfits offering cheap repairs. Consumers should hire someone who will stand by their work and can be found if any problems develop.
- Pay only by check or credit card.

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Rip-Offs

- If you have not heard from your adjuster, call them again. They may have visited your home when you were not there.
- If you are not staying in your home, leave a sign with your insurance company's name and your name prominently displayed to help insurance adjusters find your house. **DO NOT** put your policy number or claim number on a sign or where other people can find it.

Hudgens said anyone with questions about an insurance claim can call his Consumer Services Division at 404-656-2070, or toll-free at 1-800-656-2298. Regular operating hours are 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday.

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