



IICRC
Institute of Inspection Cleaning
and Restoration Certification

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Don't Get Scammed by a "Storm Chaser"

The IICRC offers tips to recognize fraudulent cleaning and restoration firms

LAS VEGAS – Sept. 5, 2017 – In the wake of Hurricane Harvey, it is easy to be tricked by a less than professional repair service. Hiring a “storm chaser” will lead to serious headaches, exorbitant costs, poor workmanship and unfinished work that can leave your home or business in worse condition. To ensure your home or business is restored by a trustworthy and reliable company after devastating flood damage, the [Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification](#) (IICRC) has compiled a list of key characteristics to help identify “storm chasers.”

“After a flood, home and business owners are in a vulnerable state,” said Pete Duncanson, IICRC Chairman. “Unfortunately, some individuals will take advantage of people’s hardships. These tips will help you identify the warning signs of a flood restoration scam artist.”

To help home owners and businesses properly restore their properties following a disaster, the IICRC identifies the following traits of a “storm chaser”:

1. **Too-good-to-be-true prices.** Often dubious restoration companies will offer low prices to grab your attention, but be wary of surprise costs that will hurt your wallet. Never let the price of the repairs be the sole criterion for choosing a restoration firm.
2. **Requesting upfront cash payments.** While it can be a regular practice to deposit up to one-third of the estimated price on the day repairs begin, avoid paying in cash or more than the expected payment. Pay by check or credit card, and pay the final amount only after the work is finished and you are happy with the quality of the repairs.
3. **A lack of references.** References are easy to check and can help you quickly identify if the company is legitimate and provides good service. Research the company online and check feedback on user-review sites such as Angie’s List or Yelp, or ask friends or business contacts if they have had any experience with the firm.
4. **High-pressure tactics.** Often, a “storm chaser” will arrive uninvited to your door peddling their services. If the contractor is using high-pressure sales tactics, it is best to turn them away politely and shut the door. Technicians should be courteous, thoroughly explain the scope of work and answer all questions. You should never feel pressure to accept their services.

5. **Lack of training.** Professional cleaning and restoration firms require management and employees to engage in formal training in a variety of cleaning and restoration disciplines, and these educational efforts will be ongoing. Inquire about the formal training and certifications of technicians who will be working in your home or business. Look for organizations that require their technicians to hold certifications from organizations like the IICRC to ensure the work is done correctly.
6. **Inability to show credentials.** Never hesitate to ask for proof. Ask to see the individual's certification card, business license and insurance certificate. To verify a company, you can contact the IICRC which is a not-for-profit standards-setting and credentialing body for the inspection, cleaning and restoration industry. Call the IICRC at 1-844-464-4272 to confirm the certification of any company that has contacted you. You can also go to <http://www.iicrc.org/locate-a-certified-professional/> to locate a qualified cleaning and restoration firm in your area.

Immediately after a storm, a home or business owner should contact their insurance provider for a storm damage assessment by an adjuster. Insurance companies can often provide a list of credible restoration companies.

As an international non-profit organization, the IICRC is dedicated to providing advice on proper and safe clean-up, and providing certification to professionals in water damage restoration.

For more information or to speak with someone about flood cleanup, water damage restoration or mold remediation in flood-affected communities, please contact jpetersen@mulberrymc.com.

About IICRC

The IICRC is an international, ANSI-accredited standard-development organization (SDO) that certifies individuals in 20+ categories within the inspection, cleaning and restoration industries. Representing more than 54,000 certified technicians and 6,000 Certified Firms in 22 countries, the IICRC, in partnership with regional and international trade associations, represents the entire industry. The IICRC does not own schools, employ instructors, produce training materials, or promote specific product brands, cleaning methods or systems. For more information, visit www.iicrc.org.

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