



Be aware of the potential for contractor fraud. Storm-chaser scams have exploded in recent years and usually target traumatized homeowners and senior citizens.

- **Check with the Linn County Building Department.** Citizens of unincorporated Linn County, the cities of Alburnett, Bertram, Center Point, Lisbon, and Mount Vernon please call [319-892-5130](tel:319-892-5130) and ask one of our permit technicians to check to see if a contractor is registered and/ or licensed. Our staff is happy to assist you.
- If you do not have a reliable contractor you have used in the past, ask your insurer to survey the damage and recommend approved contractors before hiring any post- disaster contractor. Provide your insurer with contractor licenses, written estimates and scope of work in detail.
- Ask your relatives, neighbors and friends who have had good experiences with contractors. Do not hire someone who is just walking from door to door; good ones do not need to solicit work.
- Be wary of anyone who lists a P.O. Box instead of a street address or does not have a local phone number or in-state license plates. Get everything in writing on letterhead (estimates, materials, prices, completion dates). Never sign a blank contract.
- Check any potential contractors out online and vet the company. See if they have a website and social media pages and check customer reviews online. Ask for a list of recent projects they have completed in the area and, if possible, email other homeowners who have worked with the contractors before to get their testimonials.
- Watch what you sign.
- **Professionals pull permits. Be wary of contractors who offer to do their work without proper permitting and inspection. *Permits are required by law.***
- Get more than one bid on work, so you know if you are being overcharged. Be wary of large up-front payment requirements. Wait until the repair work is completed to your satisfaction before making the final payment. Do not pay cash or write a check up front.