

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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INFORMATION FOR RESIDENTS IMPACTED BY THE TORNADO

Sturbridge, MA, June 9, 2011 – In the aftermath of last week's tornado the Town of Sturbridge would like to relay some very important information to impacted residents.

Residents are reminded to hire only licensed and insured contractors to conduct work on their properties. It is important to solicit bids or quotes for services rendered to insure you are being charged a fair rate and speak to your friends and neighbors for referrals of reputable contractors. You may call the Worcester Better Business Bureau at (508)755-2548 or visit <http://boston.bbb.org/consumers/>. If you would like to file a complaint against a contractor please contact the Public Inquiry & Assistance Center Hotline of the Office of the MA Attorney General at (617) 727-8400 at (508) 792-7600 or visit Attorney General Martha Coakleys web site to file a complaint form. You may also contact the MA Department of Consumer Affairs Consumer Hotline (toll free) at 617-973-8787 or 888-283-3757.

To look up a contractor to determine whether they are licensed you can visit <http://www.mass.gov/dps> (MA Department of Public Safety) or call 617-727-3200. This web site also explains the licensing procedure and provides information on filing complaints. All contractors should be filing building permits with the Town of Sturbridge Building Department as required.

The Town strongly encourages all homeowners to ensure that any volunteers not personally known to you have been sanctioned through the Town's Volunteer Resource Center. Sanctioned volunteers have forms on file that waive any liability claims against homeowners or the Town. Also, approved volunteers are tracked with a schedule that identifies where and when work assignments will occur. This provides additional protection and accountability for homeowners and volunteers alike. Unfortunately, some residents have encountered a few cases of unscrupulous "volunteers" appearing at properties who are in fact not "volunteers" at all.

Sanctioned volunteers will be provided with methods of denoting them from non-sanctioned volunteers within the next few days. In the meantime and beyond that, residents should contact the following to ensure the volunteers on their site are in fact sanctioned by the Town's Volunteer Resource Center:

- Selectman Thomas Creamer - 774-696-0903
- Selectman Priscilla Gimás - 774-230-5572
- Christine Jensen, Assistant to the Volunteer Resource Coordinator - 508-365-7227
- Susan Waters, Volunteer Resource Coordinator - 774-402-4387

Currently, national volunteers from the Southern Baptist Convention are working through the Town's Volunteer Resource Center to provide services to residents at no cost. These individuals all wear yellow shirts, adorned with patches specific to the Southern Baptist Convention and carry identification denoting same. This organization has been sanctioned by the Volunteer Resource Center to conduct assessments and provide services. If, however, you have any concerns or doubts, please make contact with the individuals listed above.