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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rebuild with Confidence.

AUSTIN, TEXAS – On behalf of the building and remodeling industry in Texas, the members of the Texas Association of Builders want to express their heartfelt sympathies to anyone affected by the tropical storm and Hurricane Harvey that hit the Texas Gulf Coast over the weekend. The professional building and remodeling community stands ready to assist our neighbors as we work to rebuild the homes and communities that have been destroyed or damaged.

As you begin to assess the damage to your home and property, we would like to help you make an informed decision regarding your contractor choice. Before you hire a contractor, we strongly encourage you to do your homework to ensure that you are hiring a reputable, qualified individual or company to help you rebuild your home or business. Here are a few important guidelines to help you select a competent builder or remodeler:

- Make sure the contractor has a permanent business location and a good reputation with a local bank and suppliers.
- Find out how long they have been in the building business. You want to know that your contractor will be around after construction is complete to fulfill any warranty obligations.
- Check with your local Better Business Bureau to learn if any complaints have been filed against your contractor.
- Some Texas cities require that builders are registered and bonded. Check with your city's building permits department in this regard.
- Ask for and verify references.
- Enter into a complete and clearly written contract with your builder or remodeler.
- Do not pay for the entire job up front or pay in cash. In fact, state law prohibits contractors in disaster areas from taking up front money unless they have held a physical business address in the county or adjacent county for at least one year. This law, found in Chapter 58 of the Texas Business and Commerce Code, provides other valuable protections for those rebuilding in disaster areas.
- Be cautious of unusually low-priced bids or a hard-sell to "sign today" for a low price.
- Visit the online resources available to you at <http://www.texasbuilders.org/about-us/consumer-information.html>.

We also want to remind you that some recovery-related expenses are exempt from state and local taxes. Please keep these in mind as you review any bills or invoices that you receive from your contractor:

- Texas never imposes sales tax on labor for residential repairs.
- In a declared disaster area, purchasers may claim an exemption from sales tax on separately stated charges for labor to repair or restore nonresidential real property damaged by the disaster. The materials that are used to perform the repairs are taxable.



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- Taxpayers may claim an exemption from sales tax on charges for labor to repair or restore items damaged by a disaster. The exemption may be claimed on labor to repair furniture, appliances, or other items of tangible personal property. The exemption includes labor costs to launder or dry clean damaged clothes or other property.
- Arborists' services, such as cutting down or cutting up a damaged or dead tree in a declared disaster area, are not taxable.
- Hauling away branches, limbs, or trees are waste removal services and are taxable.
- Goods and taxable services may be purchased tax free with FEMA, Salvation Army or Red Cross debit cards or vouchers.

TAB remains committed to providing support, information and resources to the citizens and home building industry affected by the recent hurricane. As you begin to repair your home, make sure your contractor is an experienced professional.

RESOURCES FOR DISASTER RECOVERY:

- Texas Association of Builders | <http://www.texasbuilders.org/about-us/consumer-information.html>
- National Association of Home Builders Disaster Recovery Resources | <https://www.nahb.org/en/consumers/homeownership/disaster-recovery-resources.aspx>
- National Association of Home Builders Disaster Recovery Websites | <https://www.nahb.org/en/consumers/homeownership/homeownership-articles/disaster-recovery-websites.aspx>
- Office of Governor Greg Abbott | <http://gov.texas.gov/news/press-release/23464>
- Texas Department of Public Safety | <https://www.dps.texas.gov/dem/stateLocalOrganizations.htm> | (512) 424-2138
- Red Cross | www.RedCross.org
- Salvation Army USA | www.SalvationArmyUSA.org
- Better Business Bureau | www.BBB.org
- Federal Emergency Management Agency | <https://www.fema.gov/> | (800) 621-FEMA
- If your insurance policy information has been lost, the Texas Department of Insurance (TDI) can help you locate your agent or insurance company. Call TDI's Consumer Help Line at (800) 252-3439 for assistance.

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ABOUT TAB: *The Texas Association of Builders (TAB) is a trade association serving the needs of home builders, remodelers and land developers throughout Texas, as well as the companies that service them. Founded in 1946, TAB is an affiliate of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) and has 28 local home builders associations and nearly 10,000 members across Texas. Representing over 509,000 jobs and more than \$38 billion annually in the Texas economy, the state and local associations play a crucial role in providing housing for Texans. For more information about the Texas Association of Builders, visit www.TexasBuilders.org.*