

# **Texas Department of Banking**

## **Press Release**

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### **Agency Encourages Citizens Displaced by Hurricane Katrina to be Cautious**

Date: September 2, 2005

The aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the relocation of citizens from their homes will temporarily require the mobilization of businesses and financial services to relief locations throughout the state. Unfortunately, the efforts to meet the needs of evacuees will draw opportunists, scam artists and thieves. As legitimate businesses attempt to respond to relief efforts and provide products and services, the consumer must be aware of and be prepared to deal with this unscrupulous element of society that is determined to prey on the misfortunes of others. The Texas Department of Banking is encouraging displaced hurricane victims to be vigilant and take precautions to avoid being victimized.

- Do not cash large checks or maintain large sums of cash.
- Ask questions and require identification to verify organizations and staff that you may be dealing with.
- Maintain control of your credit/debit card to minimize the chance of unauthorized use.
- Do not give identifying numbers such as account numbers, social security numbers or debit/credit card PINs unless you are sure the person you are giving the information to has a legitimate need.
- Look for well-lighted and easily accessible service outlets that are safe and secure places to transact your business.
- Report any abuses, scams or unusual activities to the local law enforcement authorities.
- Remain aware of your surroundings.
- If needed, seek assistance from well-know relief organizations – Red Cross, Salvation Army, United Way, or local churches and public assistance organizations.

A great majority of the citizens and businesses in Texas are more than willing to offer legitimate, honest, and fair services to aid all the victims of Hurricane Katrina. The Department is working with local, state, and federal authorities to facilitate other relief efforts to make your stay in Texas as comforting as possible under the circumstances.