



HAITIAN EARTHQUAKE RELIEF FRAUD ALERT

With all the web sites, organizations and individuals asking for contributions for HAITIAN EARTHQUAKE RELIEF, how are you going to know if they are legitimate?

We'd like to remind internet users who receive these appeals in the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti to apply a critical eye and to investigate these before responding. Past tragedies and natural disasters have prompted individuals with criminal intent to solicit contributions purportedly for a charitable organization and/or a good cause.

Therefore, before making a donation of any kind, consumers should adhere to certain guidelines, to include the following:

- Do not respond to any unsolicited (spam) incoming e-mails, including clicking links contained within those messages.
- Be skeptical of individuals representing themselves as surviving victims or officials asking for donations via e-mail or social networking sites.
- Verify the legitimacy of nonprofit organizations by utilizing various Internet-based resources that may assist in confirming the group's existence and its nonprofit status rather than following a purported link to the site.
- Be cautious of e-mails that claim to show pictures of the disaster areas in attached files because the files may contain viruses. Only open attachments from known senders.
- Make contributions directly to known organizations rather than relying on others to make the donation on your behalf to ensure contributions are received and used for intended purposes.
- Do not give your personal or financial information to anyone who solicits contributions: providing such information may compromise your identity and make you vulnerable to identity theft.

Anyone who has received an e-mail referencing the above information or anyone who may have been a victim of this or a similar incident should notify the Internet Crime Compliant Center (IC3) via www.ic3.gov. Or, you may go to <http://www.fbi.gov/cyberinvest/escams.htm> for more information.