



Public Service Announcement

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION



July 17, 2007

TIPS ON AVOIDING FRAUDULENT CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTION SCHEMES

Throughout the year events will occur which may prompt individuals with criminal intent to solicit for contributions for a charitable organization and/or a good cause. When donating, consumers should consider the following:

- Do not respond to unsolicited (spam) e-mail.
- Be skeptical of individuals representing themselves as officials soliciting via e-mail for donations.
- Do not click on links contained within an unsolicited e-mail.
- Be cautious of e-mail claiming to contain pictures in attached files, as the files may contain viruses. Only open attachments from known senders.
- To ensure contributions are received and used for intended purposes, make contributions directly to recognized organizations rather than relying on others to make the donation on your behalf.
- Validate the legitimacy of the organization by directly accessing the recognized charity or aid organization's website rather than following an alleged link to the site.
- Attempt to verify the legitimacy of the non-profit status of the organization by using various Internet-based resources, which also may assist in confirming the actual existence of the organization.
- Do not provide personal or financial information to anyone who solicits contributions: providing such information may compromise your identity and open you to identity theft.

To obtain more information on charitable contribution schemes and other types of online schemes, visit www.LooksTooGoodToBeTrue.com. If you are a victim of an online scheme, you may file a complaint with the IC3 at www.IC3.gov.