



**U.S. Department of Justice**

Federal Bureau of Investigation

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
JANUARY 13, 2010**

Washington, D.C. 20535-0001

**FBI NATIONAL PRESS OFFICE  
(202) 324-3691**

### **Haitian Earthquake Relief Fraud Alert**

*Washington, D.C.* – The FBI today reminds Internet users who receive appeals to donate money in the aftermath of Tuesday's earthquake in Haiti to apply a critical eye and do their due diligence before responding to those requests. 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 emails, 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 know 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 IC3 via [www.ic3.gov](http://www.ic3.gov).