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of the United States

Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs

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DLCA CONSUMER TIPS

The Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs (DLCA) would like to issue cautionary tips to anyone who may be considering sending monetary donations to relief organizations. It is common during times of disasters such as tsunamis, earthquakes, and hurricanes for scam artists to try and exploit the crisis by posing as relief organizations.

The Better Business Bureau (BBB) warns consumer advocates of poorly run and fraudulent charities. The BBB encourages consumers to verify that their money goes to competent relief organizations that are equipped and experienced to handle the unique challenges of providing assistance.

"It is unfortunate that in times of tragedy and devastation when people of all walks of life get together to aid in the disaster, there are those looking to see how they can benefit from it," said Commissioner Biggs.

Tips for Sending Money to Relief Organizations:

- **Be cautious when giving online-** especially in response to spam messages and emails that provide links to relief organizations. *After the tsunami disaster in 2004, many fraudulent web sites asking for money to help victims suddenly appeared.*
- **Find out if the charity has an on-the-ground presence in the disaster area.** Unless the charity has staff in the region, it can be difficult for emergency workers to get in quickly and provide food, clothing, shelter, and medical assistance. Groups like UNICEF, Mercy Corps, and The American Red Cross already have emergency workers in the devastated areas of Haiti.
- Be leery of groups that claim 100 percent of donations.

CONSUMER TIPS



"Serving Businesses and Assisting, Educating & Protecting Consumers"