

## **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](http://www.lookstoogoodtobetrue.com). If you are a victim of an online scheme, you may file a complaint with the IC3 at [www.ic3.gov](http://www.ic3.gov). **Source:** FBI