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Scam Emails Seek Donations to Help Chinese Earthquake Victims

Washington, D.C.: The FBI is asking people to beware of emails claiming to be raising money to help victims of the recent earthquake in China. Tragic incidents such as 9/11, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the Minnesota Bridge collapse, and the Virginia Tech shootings have all prompted individuals with criminal intent to solicit contributions for a charitable organization and/or a good cause. Some of the Chinese earthquake scam messages claim to be offering free vacation trips to the largest donors and even use fake logos of legitimate online pay services to fool people.

Everyone 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 expose you to identity theft.

“Scammers and criminals come forward after many of these tragic events and you should be wary of unsolicited requests for money. People should feel free to make donations, just make sure you know who you are dealing with and where the donations are going. This way you can make sure your money really makes a difference and helps out a needy person, not a greedy criminal,” said Special Agent Richard Kolko, Washington, DC.

To receive the latest information about cyber scams please go to the [FBI website](#) and sign up for e-mail alerts by clicking on one of the red envelopes. If you have received a scam e-mail please notify the IC3 by filing a complaint at www.ic3.gov. For more information on e-scams, please visit the FBI's [New E-Scams and Warnings](#) webpage.