



ATTORNEY GENERAL'S
SCAM ALERT



A Consumer Protection Alert from Oregon Attorney General John Kroger

Consumer Protection Hotline: 1-877-877-9392

Online: www.oregonattorneygeneral.gov.

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WATCH OUT FOR HAITI EARTHQUAKE SCAMS

Oregon Attorney General John Kroger is warning Oregon consumers to be on the lookout for unfamiliar organizations soliciting funds for victims of the recent earthquake in Haiti. Scammers exploit current events – from fears about a swine flu pandemic to the sale of Michael Jackson memorabilia – to defraud consumers. Scammers will seek to gain access to credit card numbers and bank accounts in order to commit identity theft. Unscrupulous charities may also seek donations, even though only a small percentage the money will actually be used to help earthquake victims.

Many legitimate organizations are seeking donations to aid victims of the devastating earthquake in Haiti. To confirm that a charity is registered, visit the Oregon Department of Justice web site: www.oregonattorneygeneral.gov. To help consumers distinguish worthy charities from con artists and unscrupulous non-profits, Attorney General Kroger offers the following tips:

- **Do not give out personal information such as credit card or bank account numbers over the phone.** Legitimate charities will accept contributions by check, which should always be made payable to the organization not the person collecting the donation.
- **Beware of callers who want your money fast.** When solicited by phone, always ask the caller to send you written materials about the charity. No legitimate organization will insist that you donate immediately. Watch out for solicitors who employ dramatic, emotional or heart-tugging stories.

- **Do not donate cash.** Legitimate charities will be pleased to receive a contribution by check. Don't send contributions with a "runner," by wire or overnight parcel pick-up service.
- **Be sure you are contributing to a legitimate organization** registered with the Attorney General's Office by searching the Department's [online database](#) or by calling 971-673-1880. You can also visit www.guidestar.org, a national clearinghouse of information about charities and their performance.

Scammers, identity thieves and unscrupulous charities pose a significant threat to Oregon consumers. Last year, more than 150 Oregon consumers reported falling victim to some kind of a scam. The Oregon Department of Justice, a national leader in policing non-profits, also took legal action against more than 20 non-profits for using misleading solicitations.

The Oregon Department of Justice is committed to protecting Oregon consumers. Anyone who thinks they may have been contacted by a scammer should call Consumer Protection Hotline at 1-877-877-9392 or go to the Oregon Department of Justice web site: <http://www.doj.state.or.us/finfraud/index.shtml>

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