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How To Avoid Scam Artist When Donating To Tsunami Relief

By Richard A. Chapo

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Millions of people have shown their true character by making cash donations to charitable groups providing relief to those devastated by the Tsunami. While your actions are a shining example of the best traits of people, a few unsavory groups are trying to make a profit off of the tragedy.

You can avoid these scam artists by taking a few simple steps. Charitable organizations rely on tax-deductible contributions as their primary funding source. Before an organization can offer the benefit of a tax deduction for donations, it must be classified as such by the Internal Revenue Service. The process is arduous and effectively acts as an informal investigation of the legitimacy of the charitable organization in question. Fortunately, the IRS makes this information available to the public.

You can check the legitimacy of a charitable organization by either contacting the IRS or accessing the agency list of charitable organizations on the Internet as follows:

IRS Customer Service: 1-800-829-1040

<http://apps.irs.gov/app/pub78>

The above link to the IRS takes you to a page where you can conduct a publication 78 search. Publication 78 is a list of all charitable organizations that have qualified for tax-exempt status with the IRS. Scam artist and unsavory

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characters are not going to be listed with the IRS. If the organization you are considering does not appear in Publication 78, you may wish to consider another organization that is on the list.

E-mail Scams

You should be cautious if you receive an e-mail requesting money for the relief effort. The e-mail may not be from a legitimate organization. Fraudulent e-mail campaigns are at an unbelievable level. If you are determined to make a contribution because of an e-mail you received, make sure

that you check out the organization with the IRS as indicated above.

Unfortunately, there is a second problem with responding to an e-mail solicitation for monetary donations. Assume that you regularly make donations to a large charity organization and you receive a request for a donation from that organization to help with the tragedy in Asia. You can safely click the link in the email and make a donation, correct? Maybe not. There is still a risk that the email is a scam. Many online businesses have ongoing problems with scam artists copying their sites, logos, headings, etc., and sending e-mail solicitations to scam individuals. There is no reason to believe that charitable organizations would be any less of a target, so be careful.

A third and final problem exists with email solicitations for donations. Most people incorrectly assume that when they see a familiar domain name in the body of an email, it means the email is legitimate. Domain names can easily be faked through a domain name masking program. It gets a bit technical, but just keep in mind that domain name in the body of an email means little.

If you still compelled to respond to an email solicitation with a donation, you should use a search engine to search for the organization listed in the email. Once you click on to the site, you can make your donation in confidence.

Your donations make a world of difference for so many people in need. By following the above recommendations, you can make sure that your donation is made to a legitimate

charitable organization.

Richard Chapo is CEO of <http://www.businessstaxrecovery.com> – Obtaining tax refunds for small businesses by finding overlooked tax deductions and credits through a free tax return review. He can be reached at richard@businessstaxrecovery.com.

Donating To Earthquake & Tsunami Victims

By Jeffrey Strain

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Donating To Earthquake & Tsunami Victims

Sometimes events take place in the world that transcend borders, nationalities and religions. The recent earthquake and following tsunami (tidal wave) in Indonesia that has killed many tens of thousands of people and displaced millions is one of those events.

For those wondering how you can help those who were affected by this tragic event, the following charities are collecting donations and helping out in the areas damaged:

Action Against Hunger
212-967-7800
<http://www.aah-usa.org>

ADRA International
800-424-2372
<http://www.adra.org>

American Friends Service Committee
(AFSC Crisis Fund)
888-588-2372
<http://www.afsc.org>

Direct Relief International
805-964-4767
<http://www.directrelief.org>

Doctors Without Borders

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888-392-0392

<http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org>

International Medical Corps

800-481-4462

<http://www.imcworldwide.org>

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

P.O. Box 372

CH-1211 Geneva 19

Switzerland

<http://www.ifrc.org>

MAP International

800-225-8550

<http://www.map.org>

Mercy Corps

800-852-2100

<http://www.mercycorps.org>

Network for Good

<http://www.networkforgood.org>

Operation USA

800-678-7255

<http://www.opusa.org>

Relief International

310-478-1200

<http://www.ri.org>

Save the Children

800-728-3843

<http://www.savethechildren.org>

United Nations World Food Program

202-530-1694

<http://www.wfp.org>

United States Fund for UNICEF

800-486-4233

<http://www.unicefusa.org>

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World Concern
800-755-5022
<http://www.worldconcern.org>

World Relief
443-451-1900
<http://www.wr.org>

World Vision
888-56-CHILD
<http://www.worldvision.org>

Information provided by <http://www.charityclickdonation.com>



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