



# FORT CAMPBELL CONSUMER AFFAIRS

101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division (AASLT) FT. Campbell, KY

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CAO 09-

WORLD TRADE CENTER (WTC) RELIEF

14 SEP

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Email protection and consumer advocacy groups warned recently of online attempts to fraudulently profit from terrorist attacks on the USA. These attempts are taking the form of unsolicited e-mail ("spam") and postings in community forums, soliciting "donations" in the name of victims of the attacks. A typical message claims to be part of an "Express Relief Fund" or "Victims Survivor Fund". One message claims that donations will go to the Red Cross, but the donation link leads to a Web site unconnected with that organization.

The Coalition Against Unsolicited Commercial Email (CAUCE), SpamCon Foundation and the Better Business Bureau (BBB) offer these tips to help determine whether a request is valid:

- If you don't know the organization or person who sent the request, it's probably fraudulent.
- Virtually no bona-fide relief agencies request funds by sending email to people who are not already involved in that agency. Solicitations made in this way may also violate laws in the United States and Europe.
- If you click on a link to donate, examine the URL shown in your browser. If the domain name of the URL is hidden, unfamiliar, or doesn't match the link's text, the request is probably fraudulent.
- Verify the solicitor's identity through another medium (such as phone) before giving money. Spammers frequently forge the identity and style of well-known entities to gain credibility.
- Be wary of appeals that are long on emotion, but short on describing what the charity will do to address the needs of victims and their families.
- If you contribute, do not give cash. Make a check or money order out to the name of the charitable organization, not to the individual collecting the donation.
- Watch out for excessive pressure for on-the-spot donations. Be wary of any request to send a "runner" to pick up your contribution.
- Do not give your credit card number or other personal information to a telephone solicitor. Ask the caller to provide you with written information on the charity's programs and finances.
- Do not hesitate to ask for written information that describes the charity's program(s) and finances such as the charity's latest annual report and financial statements. Even newly created organizations should have some basic information available.
- Be wary of charities that are reluctant to answer reasonable questions about their operations, finances and programs. Ask how much of your gift will be used for the activity mentioned in the appeal and how much will go toward other programs and administrative and fund raising costs.
- Find out what the charity intends to do with any excess contributions remaining after they have funded activities for the victims and families of the terrorist attacks.
- Check with organizations before donating goods. If the charity accepts donated items, have they confirmed there is a need for these materials?  
Ask about arrangements for shipping and distribution.
- Remember the opportunities to give will continue. The tragedy aftermath will not disappear when the headlines do.
- Check out charities by contacting the Better Business Bureau. Information on national charities is also available from the BBB Wise Giving Alliance at [www.give.org](http://www.give.org)

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