



# BERKELEY POLICE DEPARTMENT

## Media Services

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### \*\*\* CRIME ALERT \*\*\*

#### *Con Artist Posing as Berkeley Firefighter*

**Berkeley, California** (Tuesday, November 28, 2006) – Now that we are in the holiday season, Berkeley Police Officers want to remind the community that not all Phone Solicitors have good intentions. On November 24, 2006, Berkeley Fire received a call from a Berkeley resident stating that a phone solicitor had called requesting a monetary donation. The resident wisely called the Berkeley Fire Department to find out that BFD has never nor will they ever call community members asking for monetary donations over the phone.

Most charities are honest, well-run organizations. Unfortunately, a small number of organizations take advantage of the goodwill and generosity of people who want to contribute to worthy causes.

Money given to dishonest organizations hurts in two ways: the benefit is wasted because the organization does not fulfill its promised good deeds; and the money is diverted from reputable charities that would use it to provide valuable services.

Giving is important, but make sure you are giving wisely. Here are a few things to think about before making a donation to any charity.

- Find out how the contributions will support the cause.
- Never give any personal information such as identification numbers, bank account numbers or credit card numbers. Pay with a check, so that you have a receipt.
- Verify that the solicitor is working with the organization...if in doubt check it out.
- Don't feel pressured to make a donation "today only" – if they are legitimate, they will give you contact information to reach them at a later time.

#### **Public Safety Fundraising Appeals:**

Police and firefighters risk their lives to make communities safer. When a fundraiser calls or writes to solicit donation on behalf of a fire or police service organization, many people consider making a donation as a show of support. Donors should be aware that the words "Police" or "Firefighter" in an organizations name do not necessarily mean that police or firefighters are members of the group. Also, solicitation that claims local ties with public safety personnel in your area does not necessarily mean that your donation will be used locally.

More information about charitable contributions can be found on the California Attorney General's website at <http://ag.ca.gov/>.

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