

Richard Hooks Warns Donors About Shocking Police and Firefighter Fraud

Written by Australian Business

SAN ANTONIO, TX, September 21, 2013 **/24-7PressRelease/** -- Even though there are countless firefighter and police organizations across the United States that are collecting charitable donations for perfectly legitimate reasons, retired Fire Chief, [Richard Hooks](#), urges all citizens to use caution before opening their wallets to a person in uniform. According to a recent [article](#) in Macon, Georgia's online publication The Telegraph, one cannot always trust that an individual who claims involvement with a public service organization is, in fact, who they say they are.

As the article asserts, "There are a lot of hype merchants out there, fast-talking hucksters only too happy to take [a person's] money without giving [them] all the facts needed to make an informed giving decision." In most of these scam cases, an unscrupulous person will show up at the door of an unsuspecting individual, claiming that they are a police officer or firefighter, and try to extract cash donations on behalf of a local, worthy cause. It is only after giving generously that the kind-hearted citizen realizes that they have been duped.

Having worked as a firefighter, and as the Fire Chief in the Corpus Christi area for many years, Richard Hooks expresses shock and outrage over this growing epidemic: "Giving is a personal choice," explains Hooks, "and it is a choice that many of us make in order to support our local public safety officials, firefighters, and police officers. It is unfortunate that criminals will use the names of our emergency departments in order to con money from honest citizens that truly want to help our community."

Although officer impersonation is a favorite means for criminals to extort money from innocent civilians, members of the general public even, unfortunately, have to worry about real-life law enforcement or public safety officials asking for money under false pretenses. All around the country, police officers and firefighters are inventing false charities and simply pocketing the funds they receive.

With all of this deception going on across the nation, it is only natural that one might want to decline offering donations to individuals who come door-to-door; however, it is, in fact, possible to give responsibly, as long as one remains discerning and uses common sense. According to Richard Hooks, the best way for a person to help out their local community is to send their donation directly to the source. When faced with a neighborhood collector, Hooks suggests bypassing the situation: "I would recommend that any citizen who receives this type of solicitation politely tell the caller that they will contact the agency themselves to discuss a donation. Any professional organization would honor that request."

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Citizens should also be aware of the fact that most police officer and firefighter groups are not legal charities, although a few are 501(c)(3) organizations. Any individual who suspects fundraising fraud should immediately contact local law enforcement and the Better Business Bureau, says Richard Hooks.

ABOUT:

[Richard Hooks](#) is the retired Fire Chief of the Corpus Christi Fire Department. He has more than 30 years of experience in his field. Mr. Hooks attended both Del Mar College and Texas A & M University in Corpus Christi, Texas. After college, he proudly served his country in the United States Coast Guard from 1973 until 1976. When he is not working, Mr. Hooks is an avid fisherman. He also enjoys sailing in his boat around the Corpus Christi Bay area.