



Town of Webster
Police Department
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PRESS RELEASE

To: All Media Outlets

From: Detective Gordon D. Wentworth, Jr.

RE: Association for Firefighters and Paramedics Solicitations

Date: May 23, 2012

On 05/23/12 The Webster Police and Fire Department received reports of telemarketers soliciting on their behalf. Webster Public Safety Departments (Police, Fire, or EMS) are NOT soliciting for donations at this time.

Webster Police conducted an investigation into the nature of the solicitations and it was discovered that a company known as the "Association for Firefighters and Paramedics" of Santa Ana, CA had been placing telephone calls in furtherance of soliciting donations for burn victims. **They are in no way associated or affiliated with any Webster Public Safety Department.**

Furthermore, it was discovered through the investigation that the "Association for Firefighters and Paramedics" appeared to be a genuine 501(c)3 non-profit organization, however they had been accused of using "deceptive fundraising tactics" in the past. This organization claims to donate 80-100% of the donation to the charity, when in fact, an investigation conducted by the State of California Attorney General's Office revealed that "less than 15%" of the monies collected were being given to the charity, while the remaining monies collected were used only to raise money. In a press release dated 09/28/10, the California Attorney General's Office stated: *"The trustees of this charity grossly abused their responsibilities as guardians of charitable assets... They betrayed the trust of donors by squandering donations on such things as an expensive Caribbean cruise and trips to posh resorts."* The State of California and the Association for Firefighters and Paramedics did come to a settlement agreement over the use of deceptive fundraising tactics. That settlement agreement can be found on the internet.

Again, The Webster Public Safety Departments are not currently soliciting for donations. Residents are reminded to be cautious when providing personal identifying information over the telephone. They are further reminded to refrain from inviting potential scammers to their homes to collect money. Although the Association for Firefighters and Paramedics appears to be a legitimate non-profit organization, they are NOT soliciting on behalf of any Webster Public Safety Department.