

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS  
DIVISION OF FIRE SAFETY  
OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL



# SECURITY ALERT

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SECURITY ALERT 14-7

## Warning of Unauthorized Solicitation during the Holidays Issued December 2014

The Division of Fire Safety has recently been made aware of recent solicitations by a California based organization, a self-described charity called the **“Association for Firefighters and Paramedics”** ostensibly using the guise of support of local fire and paramedic groups to solicit funds for “burn victims.” A check of this organization with the Division of Consumer Affairs’ Charitable Campaign Unit reveals that it has not registered with them as required by New Jersey State law.

The fundraising organization is consistently rated by charity watchdogs as one of America’s worst and was once portrayed by California Attorney General Edmund G. Brown as “betrayers of the public trust placed in them.” Brown was speaking about a settlement reached with the organization in 2010 which was headquartered in Orange County, CA at the time, documenting hundreds of thousands of dollars meant for burn victims diverted to such things as expensive Caribbean cruises and trips to posh resorts.

The Division of Fire Safety is enlisting the assistance of local and county emergency response agencies to call the public’s attention and especially that of our seniors who hold emergency services in high esteem and donate generously to them to avoid solicitations by this outfit; who undermine the work of legitimate charities by their practices.

The following excerpt was taken from a report done by the charity watchdog organization SeriousGivers.org on the **“Association for Firefighters and Paramedics”** (AFP) two years ago:

AFP’s stated mission is “to provide financial assistance and support to burn victims and burn center programs . . . .” Its spending suggests a different focus: AFP spent about \$61 on fundraising for every \$1 it spent on programs. AFP raised about \$1.3 million for the year. About 90% of that came through ten outside fundraising organizations hired by AFP to conduct mail and/or telephone campaigns. Those ten collected \$1,165,476 in the name of AFP, and turned over \$128,425. That means 89 cents of every dollar raised stayed in the fundraisers’ pockets.”

Organizations such as this also tend to fundraise in the name of police and veteran charities, but have no legitimate connection and ultimately wind up keeping much of the donation monies raised. Your assistance in exposing these organizations will help ensure that citizens’ donations go to legitimate charitable organizations.

**PLEASE POST IMMEDIATELY (U//FOUO)**