




**GREGORY D. TOTTEN**  
**District Attorney**

**NEWS RELEASE**

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**Charitable Solicitation Fraud**

*VENTURA, California* – District Attorney Gregory D. Totten warned today that county residents should exercise increased vigilance against scams designed to exploit residents impacted by the Woolsey fire, Hill fire, and Camp fire. Scammers have been calling county residents and soliciting donations on behalf of the “Fireman’s Fund” and other similarly named organizations designed to imply a relationship with firefighter organizations. Presume any current solicitation calls are fraudulent until proven otherwise. If you receive a phone call and question its legitimacy, the District Attorney recommends contacting the Ventura County Professional Firefighters Association at (805) 484-8844. Residents are cautioned to give money only to charities and relief organizations with which they are familiar and whose proper contact information can be verified, such as via the known organization’s website.

The District Attorney also recommends the following tips to avoid becoming a victim:

- Scammers posing as insurance company representatives may call homeowners with an option to pay an increased premium over the phone to expand coverage options for possible smoke damage, or to pay their deductible in the same manner. Insured individuals are advised to contact their insurance companies directly regarding any offers related to their insurance coverage. Only accept information from trusted sources.

- Exercise caution regarding unsolicited clean-up, repair, or construction scams. These solicitations are initiated door-to-door in impacted neighborhoods. They may involve demands for upfront payment or deposits, which are then pocketed while the promised work is never completed. Instead use only licensed contractors. You can verify a contractor's license at <http://www.cslb.ca.gov/>. If a contractor claims necessary work is covered by your insurance company, first call your insurance company to confirm. Consider using contractors recommended by your insurance company for any needed work and obtain more than one estimate. Also consider only using contractors with a local business location.

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The Ventura County District Attorney's Office is the public prosecutor for the county's 850,000 residents. The office employs approximately 280 employees including attorneys, investigators, victim advocates, and other professional support staff who strive to seek justice, ensure public safety, and protect the rights of crime victims.

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