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- Overseas Offices
- Submit a Crime Tip
- File an Internet Crime Complaint
- More Contacts

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- History
- More About Us

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- Common Frauds
- More Protections

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Press Release

For Immediate Release
September 15, 2005

Washington D.C.
FBI National Press Office
(202) 324-3691

FBI ANNOUNCES TIP LINE TO COMBAT PUBLIC CORRUPTION & GOVERNMENT FRAUD

Washington, D.C. -- Today the FBI launched a tip line, **1-800-CALL FBI** or **1-800-225-5313**, to collect information and complaints of public corruption and government fraud, in connection with the Hurricane Katrina aftermath. Information related to these matters can be provided toll-free, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. These lines will be manned by FBI personnel and the information collected will be analyzed, investigated, and shared with our state, local, and federal law enforcement personnel.

Assistant Director Chris Swecker, FBI Criminal Investigative Division, stressed that these crimes would not be tolerated as, "We have a responsibility to ensure that government relief efforts are not undermined by unscrupulous individuals. It is very unfortunate that natural disasters, such as Hurricane Katrina, while bringing out the best in most people also draw criminal elements who would take advantage of the federal government's relief efforts."

The FBI has taken a proactive and preventative stance on this matter and will ensure that criminals who perpetrate these crimes are brought to justice. To clarify the types of crimes that this tip line will focus on Public Corruption is criminal acts, where it is alleged that either a public official (elected, appointed, or under contract), and/or a private individual, has or is engaged in a corrupt scheme that involves either a direct or indirect abuse of the public official's trust and/or undermines the integrity of federal, state or local governmental operations, in violation of federal law. In addition, Assistant Director Swecker stressed that "calls to this tip line should be limited to fraud activity and corruption by businesses or persons engaged in purported contract fraud, procurement or purchasing fraud, and/or fraud of federally funded programs."

Other Hurricane Katrina fraud, to include online scams such as spamming unsolicited donation requests or spoofing legitimate charity websites should continue to be relayed to the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) or www.ic3.gov, while identity theft complaints should be reported to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at www.ftc.gov or the FTC's toll-free ID theft hotline, 1-877-ID-THEFT.

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