



RINA Alert!

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Earthquake Relief Donations Now Deductible

On January 22, 2010, President Obama signed into law a bill that lets taxpayers claim donations made to earthquake relief in Haiti on their 2009 tax returns. The contributions must have been made after January 11, 2010, and before March 1, 2010, for the relief of victims in areas affected by the January 12, 2010, earthquake in Haiti. Specifically, you are permitted to treat the donation as having been made on December 31st, 2009 for tax purposes.

Contributions made by cash, text message, check, credit card or debit card are acceptable. To claim the benefit, taxpayers must itemize their deductions on Schedule A.

Keep a record of any deductible donations you make. For texted donations, a telephone bill meets the requirement if it shows the name of the organization that benefited, as well as the date and amount of the donation.

For other contributions, keep a bank record, such as a canceled check, or a receipt from the charity showing its name and the date and amount of the contribution.

Remember that donations to foreign organizations generally are not deductible.

Finally, you are not *required* to claim the deduction on your 2009 return. Based on your tax situation, it may be better for you to claim the deduction in 2010 rather than in 2009. For example, if you will not be itemizing deductions in 2009, you will want to wait until 2010. You cannot claim the deduction for both years.

Please contact your RINA representative should you have any questions.

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