



# ATTORNEY GENERAL

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## CONSUMER COLUMN

### TO DONATE OR NOT TO DONATE? *Consumer Tips for Charitable Giving*

(Baton Rouge, LA)—As the holiday season draws near, you may notice an increase in requests for charitable donations. While the holiday season is a time for family, friends, and traditions, it can also be a time when con-artists are looking to benefit from your generosity.

If you are solicited to make a charitable donation, it pays to be a smart consumer and investigate the request before you write that check. The Louisiana Attorney General's Office offers these suggestions from the Federal Trade Commission to help you make the most of your charitable donations:

- Donate to charities you recognize and have a long history in your community.
- Be wary of charities with names that are similar to the name of well-known charitable organizations. Many fake charities will use a name that is very similar to legitimate charitable organizations in an effort to get your donation.
- Give directly to the charity. Did you know that many charitable organizations use professional fundraisers to help get donations? When you receive a phone call asking for a donation on behalf of a charity, the person making the phone call may not work for the charity but rather for a fundraising company. The fundraising company is allowed to keep a portion of what they collect for the charity, thus reducing the amount of money the charity receives. When you receive a phone call requesting a charitable donation, ask if the caller is a professional fundraiser. If they are, ask how much of your donation they will keep and how much will go to the charity.
- Never give out personal information such as credit card or bank account numbers over the phone. If you provide this type of information you may open the door to identity theft.
- Check out the charity before you donate. Charitable organizations are required to register with the Louisiana Attorney General's Office. You can also contact your local Better Business Bureau.
- Don't give or send cash. For security and tax record purposes, contribute by check. Write the official name of the charity on your check.

- Ask for identification and written information when approached in person for a donation. The written information should include a physical address for the charity, information about the charity, and how your donation will be used. If you have questions, contact the charity to verify they are soliciting contributions.
- Don't be pressured into making a donation. Legitimate organizations will be happy to answer questions and provide you with information you need to make an informed donation.

For more information on charitable organizations, please contact the Louisiana Attorney General's Office at 1-800-351-4889 or visit our website at [www.agbuddycaldwell.com](http://www.agbuddycaldwell.com). You can also contact the Federal Trade Commission at [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov) or the Better Business Bureau at [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org).

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