

December 2014

For information about fraud and scams or to schedule a presentation about fraud related issues and prevention contact:

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DON'T GET SCROOGED

It's that time of year when solicitations for charities increase. But donors should be wary about giving without doing a little research and ensuring the charity is legitimate.

Avoid any charity or fund-raiser that:

- Won't provide proof that a contribution is tax deductible
- Uses a name that closely resembles that of a reputable organization
- Thanks a you for a previous pledge that you can't remember giving to in the past
- Asks for bank account or credit card information before you have reviewed information and agreed to contribute
- Uses high-pressure tactics to secure a donation before you have had a chance to make an informed decision about giving
- Asks for donations in cash
- Offers to send a courier to collect the donation or asks for you to wire money
- Guarantees sweepstakes winnings in exchange for a contribution
- Refuses to provide written information about its identity, its mission, its costs, and how the donation will be used

Charity Checklist

- Be wary of appeals that tug at your heart strings, especially pleas involving patriotism and current events.
- Ask for the name of the charity if the telemarketer does not provide it promptly.
- Ask what percentage of the donation is used to support the causes described in the solicitation, and what percentage is used for administrative costs.
- Call the charity directly to find out whether it's aware of the solicitation and has authorized the use of its name.
- If the telemarketer claims that the charity will support local organizations, call the local groups to verify.
- Discuss the donation with a trusted family member or friend before committing the funds.
- Don't provide any credit card or bank account information until you have reviewed all information from the charity and decided to donate.
- Ask for a receipt showing the amount of the contribution and stating that it is tax deductible; (Understand that contributions made to a "tax exempt" organization are not necessarily tax deductible.)
- Avoid cash gifts which can be lost or stolen. For security and tax record purposes, pay by check made payable to the beneficiary, not the solicitor.

Before you give, investigate the charity on one of these watchdog sites www.give.org; www.charitynavigator.org; or www.charitywatch.org.

Denver DA's Fraud Line: 720-913-9179