

Mitchell Crime Prevention Unit November Crime Prevention Tip

Topic: Charity Scams

Taking the following precautions will help ensure your donation dollars benefit the organization and people you want to help:

- Request written information. Ask for the name of the organization, its mission, plans for achieving its objectives, and how much of every dollar collected is used for charitable purposes.
- Call the beneficiary/organization. Find out whether they are aware of the solicitation and have authorized the use of their name.
- Find out how your donation will be distributed. How much will go to the program you want to support and how much will cover the charity's administrative costs. If this is a professional fund-raiser, ask them how much money they keep.
- Refuse high-pressure appeals. Legitimate fund-raisers won't push you to give on the spot.
- Consider the cost. When buying merchandise or tickets for special events, or when receiving free goods in exchange for giving, remember that these items cost money and are generally paid for out of the contributions.
- Avoid cash gifts because they can be lost or stolen. For security and tax record purposes, it is best to pay by check. Make your check payable to the beneficiary, NOT the solicitor.