

Charity Scam Checklist

Initial Response to Donation Requests

- ☐ I took time to think about the donation request rather than responding immediately
- ☐ I didn't feel pressured by urgent or emotional appeals
- ☐ I asked specific questions about how my donation would be used
- ☐ I received clear, detailed answers about the charity's programs

Research Steps

- ☐ I verified the exact name of the charity (watching for "soundalike" names)
- ☐ I searched for the charity on one of these watchdog sites:
 - ☐ Charity Navigator (charitynavigator.org)
 - ☐ Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance (give.org)
 - ☐ CharityWatch (charitywatch.org)
- ☐ I checked if the charity is registered with my state's charity regulator

- ☐ I searched the charity's name online along with words like "complaint," "scam," or "review"
- ☐ I visited the charity's official website (verifying the URL is correct)
- ☐ I called the charity using a phone number I found independently (not one provided in the solicitation)

Red Flags to Watch For

- ☐ The charity did NOT:
 - ☐ Request cash-only donations
 - ☐ Offer to send a courier to collect my donation
 - ☐ Ask for payment via wire transfers or gift cards
 - ☐ Thank me for previous donations I don't remember making
 - ☐ Use high-pressure tactics or make me feel guilty
 - ☐ Refuse to provide written information about their organization

Transparency Verification

- The charity provided or has available:
 - ❑ Financial information or annual reports
 - ❑ Clear explanation of their mission and programs
 - ❑ Information about their leadership team
 - ❑ A physical address (not just a P.O. box)
 - ❑ Details about what percentage of donations go to programs versus administration
- File a report with the National Center for Disaster Fraud (for disaster-related scams) at 866-720-5721
- Alert the legitimate organization if scammers are impersonating them

My Personal Giving Plan

- I've created a charity budget for the year
- I've researched causes that are important to me
- I've prepared a list of pre-verified charities I trust
- I've planned my disaster relief donations in advance

If I Suspect a Charity Scam

- Report to the Federal Trade Commission at ReportFraud.ftc.gov
- Contact my state's charity regulator or Attorney General's office

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