

A Message from Arizona Attorney General
Terry Goddard

Protecting Arizona's Families
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Terry Goddard Offers Tips to Avoid Fraudulent Holiday Charitable Appeals

(Phoenix, Ariz. - Nov. 12, 2009) The holiday season is fast approaching, a time of year when many Arizonans give back to their communities. To help ensure a rewarding experience, Attorney General Terry Goddard recommends consumers take the following precautions when making charitable donations:

- Do not pay bills or invoices you have received from charities unless you know you have already made a commitment to support them.
- Be skeptical of anyone asking for a donation by requesting your credit card number or bank account information over the phone unless you already donate to that charity.
- Don't be shy about asking what percentage of your donation will go directly to the charity versus what percentage will go toward administrative costs.
- Remember to ask for a receipt and a statement that the contribution is tax deductible.
- Call the Secretary of State's Office at (602) 542-4285 or visit their Web site, www.azsos.gov, to make sure the charity is registered with the Secretary of State. A charity that operates without such registration is violating the law and should be a red flag for consumers. Be aware, however, that registration with the Secretary of State does not ensure that all of the charity's activities are legitimate.

Several Web sites, including www.charitynavigator.org, www.give.org and www.guidestar.org, provide information on the financial histories of numerous charities. These can be a useful starting point for consumers looking to research companies to which they are thinking of making donations.

The Attorney General's Office offers numerous resources to help consumers stay safe this holiday season, including red flags for common holiday consumer scams and resources to make sure the gifts you give are safe and age appropriate. New information will be released each week throughout the holiday season and is available at Attorney General's Web site, www.azag.gov.

If you believe you have been a victim of fraud, please contact the Attorney General's Office in Phoenix at 602.542.5763; in Tucson at 520.628.6504; or outside the Phoenix and Tucson metro areas at 1.800.352.8431. To file a complaint in person, the Attorney General's Office has satellite offices throughout the State with volunteers available to help. Locations and hours of operation are posted on the Attorney General's Web site at www.azag.gov. Consumers can also file complaints online through the Web site.

Terry