

Charity Checklist

By John F. Smith

- Charity Check
 - Never give to a charity you know nothing about.
 - Request written literature and a copy of the charity's latest annual report.
 - Be wary of charities that spring up overnight in connection with current events or natural disasters.
 - Ask for written information about the charity, including the name, address, and telephone number.
 - Check if the charity or fundraiser is registered.
 - Be wary of charities offering to send a courier or overnight delivery service to collect your donation immediately.
 - Watch out for similar sounding names.
- Your Donation
 - Don't be shy about asking who wants your money.
 - Find out if the organization is aware of the solicitation and has authorized the use of its name.
 - Refuse high pressure appeals.
 - Ask how much of your donation goes for general administration and fundraising expenses.
 - Do not send or give cash donations.
 - Do not give your credit card number to a telephone solicitor or internet site that you do not know.
 - Be sure to obtain a receipt or printed copy of your donation.
 - Know the difference between 'tax exempt' and 'tax deductible.'
 - Look twice at organizations that use meaningless terms to suggest they are tax exempt charities.
 - Check your records if you have any doubt about whether you've made a pledge or a contribution.
 - Be cautious of promises of guaranteed sweepstakes winnings in exchange for a contribution.
 - Give generously if you can.