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.