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Attorney General Jackley Warns of Charitable Scams Relating to Tornado Disaster

PIERRE, S.D –   Attorney General Marty Jackley is asking South Dakotans to beware of scam artists potentially exploiting tornado victims from South Dakota. These scam artists typically show up after disasters and pose as charities to collect money from those who are willing to help.

"South Dakotans are very generous individuals and will immediately reach out to those in the Delmont area that are in need of financial assistance in the aftermath of this disaster. We are asking those who are willing to give to take some simple precautions to ensure their assistance is directed to those in need," said Jackley.

Here are a few tips to avoid becoming a victim:

- Verify the legitimacy of the nonprofit organization as well as its nonprofit status. Visit such sites as www.charitynavigator.org or www.guidestar.org.
- Ask specifically how this donation will be used.
- Ask how much of your donation will go to the charity and how much will be used to pay fund raising costs.
- Consider giving to charitable organizations with a strong history in providing disaster relief.
- Beware of charitable organizations that use sound alike names of legitimate companies.
- Donors should not respond to any unsolicited emails, but rather go directly to recognized charities or aid organizations.
- Do not pay cash. For security reasons write a check.
- If you want additional information about the charity ask that they send it to you in writing. Any legitimate company will be more than happy to provide this information to verify their legitimacy.

These tips apply not only to local disasters, but for those disaster victims of national and world disaster like the recent earthquake in Nepal.

 For more information about charitable giving, contact the South Dakota Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division at 1-800-300-1986 or www.state.sd.us/attorney.

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