



NEWS RELEASE

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Attorney General Marty Jackley Warns of Scams Following Hurricane Harvey

PIERRE, S.D. – Attorney General Marty Jackley said today that South Dakotans should expect to be contacted by unscrupulous scammers soliciting donations to help the victims of Hurricane Harvey.

"South Dakota consumers are very generous individuals and when disaster hits we are always willing to assist," said Jackley. "In the wake of tragedy, there are always those who want to take advantage of others for their own benefit, so please proceed with caution when choosing a charity."

Here are a few tips to avoid becoming a victim:

- Don't be fooled by "sound-alike" charities. Many scam artists use names that are designed to resemble well-known charities. Don't assume a charity is legitimate based on its name.
- If you are contacted by a professional telemarketer, donors should ask the question of what percentage is actually going to the charity. This will help the donor make a better determination if they want to give to the telemarketer or donate directly to the charity to maximize the benefits of the funds.
- Be skeptical of e-mail requests for donations by unfamiliar organizations or those pretending to be well-known charities. This is just another attempt to obtain your personal identifying information.
- Be cautious of anyone wanting on-the-spot donations or refusing to provide written information about their organization. Do not contribute if they refuse to provide you with the requested information.
- Consider giving to charities close to the storm. Check Charity Navigator to ensure the organization is worthy of your support.
- Error on the side of caution when thinking of donating through a crowd funding source such as GoFundMe. Multiple scam postings have been listed.
- Do not give a credit card number or checking account number over the phone and do not send cash.

- The best way to ensure that the charity of your choice receives your donation is to request a return envelope. Once you receive the information in the mail use a credit card or check so that you have a record of your expense.

For more information about charitable giving, contact the South Dakota Consumer Protection Division at 1-800-300-1986 or <http://consumer.sd.gov/>.