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Don't Give to a Charity Imposter: Here Are Some Tips for Avoiding That

Author : David Gurliacci

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When you give to a charity, you're giving because you care and want to help — and you want to be sure your money actually gets to those you're trying to help. But scammers who pretend to be a charity try to get to your wallet.

So consider these tips before you give:

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Rule out anyone who asks you to send cash, pay with a gift card, or wire money.

Use the name of the charity and do some research, especially when donating for the first time. Search for the name of the charity online — plus the word “complaint” or “scam.” That’s one way to learn about a charity’s reputation.

- Give to charities you know and trust, with a proven track record. Before you give to any charity, check them out with the [Better Business Bureau's \(BBB\) Wise Giving Alliance](#), [Charity Navigator](#), [Charity Watch](#), or [GuideStar](#).
- Avoid charities that seem to pop up overnight in connection with a natural disaster or other tragedy.
- Don’t assume that pleas for help on crowdfunding sites or social media are legitimate. Real victims’ pictures and stories can easily be misused to con you.
- Before you text to donate, confirm the number on the charity’s website.
- Never click on links or open attachments in e-mails, even if they appear to be from a charity. You could unknowingly install [malware](#) on your computer or be taken to a look-alike website run by scammers.

You can [find more information here](#). If you think you’ve spotted a charity scam, [tell the Federal Trade Commission](#).

— *This article by Emma Fletcher of the Federal Trade Commission division of Consumer and Business Education, [originally was published](#) Thursday on the FTC Consumer Information blog.*