

Boulder County Fires:

Be on the lookout for fraudulent charities



During times of crisis brought on by natural disasters and national tragedies, many people want to do their part by giving to charity to help victims and their families. Unfortunately, scam artists can prey on the generosity of others by setting up fraudulent charities and soliciting funds. This is especially true when disasters are large in scope and garner national attention, like the recent fires in Boulder County.

Due to the desire of many Coloradans to assist in times of crisis, there is a need to ensure that all donations go to established and reputable sources for disaster relief.

Scammers use the same methods to solicit donations as real charities do—telemarketing, door-to-door contact, email, mobile texts, and social media to name a few.

If you're considering giving to a donation request, research the organization or charity before giving them your money.

Tips for spotting a charity scam:

- **Do your research before giving.**
- **Ask for detailed information** about the organization including name, address, telephone number, licensing information, and percentage of your donation that will go to the charity.
 - **Search online for substantiating information** as well as for their reputation using services like [ChecktheCharity.com](https://www.checkthecharity.com), the [Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance](https://www.betterbusinessbureau.org), or others. Contact the organization directly if you decide to donate.
 - **Be wary of "new" charities.** Charitable organizations that start in response to current events and natural disasters should be avoided. Even if they are legitimate, they most likely do not have the infrastructure in place to get the donations to the affected people or area.
- **Avoid tell-tale signs.** Avoid charities or fundraisers that refuse to provide detailed information about their identity, mission, how the donation will be used, what percentage of the donation will go to those in need, and what percentage will go to organizational costs.



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Tips for spotting a charity scam (cont.):

- Avoid charities that use names closely resembling those of better-known organizations or organizations that thank you for a pledge you don't remember making. Be wary of those that use high pressure tactics to get you to donate immediately, anyone asking for donations in cash or by wire transfer, or those that offer to send a courier to collect your donation immediately.
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- Avoid any organization that guarantees sweepstakes winnings in exchange for a contribution.
- When it comes to crowdfunding, always do your research. Crowdfunding is a popular way to raise money online for a charity, organization, or cause (think GoFundMe, Indigeogo, and Kickstarter). Unfortunately, scammers will use crowdfunding platforms to create a fake campaign with the intention of pocketing the donations or pledges.
- If you're thinking about contributing to a campaign, take a minute to research the creator's background and reviews before you pay. For example, has the creator engaged in previous campaigns? How did those campaigns turn out?



For additional information please visit **Stop Fraud Colorado's Charity Fraud Center**. If you believe you have been victimized by a scam or wish to report suspicious activity, please file a report here or by calling **1-800-222-4444**.



Report fraud at www.StopFraudColorado.gov or call 800-222-4444.