

From the Desk of Detective Dave

Charitable Giving Scams

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Legitimate charity and fundraiser groups use a variety of methods to solicit funds. These methods include telephone calls, snail mail, e-mail, the internet, and social networking sites. Scammers use the same methods to take advantage of your generosity. If you're thinking about giving to a charity, do your research to avoid being taken in a fraudulent charity scam.

Here are some signs that a charity solicitation may be a scam:

- The organization cannot provide detailed information about its identity, mission, costs, and how the donation will be used.
- Guarantees sweepstakes winnings in exchange for a contribution. By law, you never have to give a donation to be eligible to win a sweepstakes.
- Uses high-pressure tactics like trying to get you to donate immediately, without giving you time to think about it and do your research.
- Offers to send a courier or overnight delivery service to collect the donation immediately.
- Uses a name similar to a better-known, reputable organization.
- Asks for donations in cash or asks you to wire money.

Charitable organizations operating within Colorado are required to register with the Secretary of State's Office. The S.O.S. website is simple to use and will provide you immediate results when you search for an organization. Another way to check out a charitable organization is through using the IRS Exempt Organizations Select Check tool. You can locate this tool on the internet by searching for either "IRS select check" or "EO select check." You don't need all the information the tool asks for, and by simply typing in the name of the organization, you will be provided a list of organizations to review. However, the more information you provide, the better the results will be.

If you believe you have been scammed by a fraudulent charitable organization or solicitor, contact the Frederick Police Department at 720-382-5700 to report the crime.

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