



SCAM ALERT!

A Consumer Update from
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Phoney Charities

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For most of us, the ringing of the bells and the red Salvation Army buckets are one of the hallmarks of the holiday season. Yet charitable organizations have expanded far beyond those outside our local supermarkets. Many of these organizations are reputable and provide a necessary service to our community. However, criminals have recognized an opportunity to profit as well.

You may receive a telephone call, letter or email requesting that you donate to a particular charity. Before you choose to donate to a charity, especially if you are making a donation using your credit card or with your bank account information, consider the following:

- Is the charity a well-established charity with a verifiable organization (such as the Red Cross or Habitat for Humanity);
- If the charity does have documents describing their organization, how much of your gift do they allot for their own expenses and how much to they allot to the purpose of the charity

Check with the Attorney General's Office which provides a database of charities at www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/charitablesearch or www.charitynavigator.org

Be wary of new charities, especially those that pop up just after an event, such as a natural disaster. These charities may not be scams, but may be ill-equipped to meaningfully contribute to the stated purpose of the charity.

The Montgomery County Prosecutor's Office does not want to discourage giving money to charity. However, we want to ensure that the money you give goes to those in need, rather than to those attempting to steal your money.

The above ALERT is part of the Montgomery County Prosecuting Attorney's initiative to help citizens become aware of ways they can avoid becoming a victim, or ways they can help stop criminal activity that may be occurring. Upon request, the office can provide presentations on crime prevention actions and activities to halt crime and increase the quality of life in our community.

If you would like additional information on the above ALERT, or would like additional information regarding our programs to assist consumers in general and/or seniors in particular, please contact Kimberly Oliver, Supervising Attorney, Adult Protection Unit, or Ward Barrentine, Supervising Attorney, Fraud and Economic Crimes Unit at 937-225-5757.

If you would like us to send *SCAM ALERT* updates to you electronically, please send your e-mail address to: newsletter@mcpo.com to be added to our distribution list.

