

DISASTER RELIEF DONATING TIPS

Before you donate, consumers should adhere to certain guidelines, to include the following:

*Beware of any "new" organization soliciting donations on behalf of a world disaster, which may contact you by telephone, mail, or electronic means.

*Do not respond to any unsolicited (spam) incoming e-mails including clicking links contained within those messages.

* Be skeptical of individuals representing themselves as surviving victims or officials asking for donations via e-mail or social networking sites.

*Verify the legitimacy of nonprofit organizations by utilizing various Internet-based resources that may assist in confirming the group's existence and its nonprofit status rather than following a purported link to the site.

*Be cautious of e-mails that claim to show pictures of the disaster areas in attached files because the files may contain viruses. Only open attachments from known senders.

* Make contributions directly to known organizations rather than relying on others to make the donation on your behalf to ensure contributions are received and used for intended purposes.

* Do not give your personal or financial information to anyone who solicits contributions: Providing such information may compromise your identity and make you vulnerable to identity theft.

*Trust your instincts. If you have doubts about donating to a charity, do not contribute to it. Before you donate, contact the Department of Business Regulation, Securities Division, Charities Section at 401-462-9583 to learn if the organization is properly registered.

*Please also read the "Tips for Donating".