



Taxpayers should be cautious of scammers targeting disaster donations

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Scammers commonly set up fake charities to take advantage of people's generosity during natural disasters and other tragic events. Taxpayers should use the [Tax Exempt Organization Search](#) tool to check that an organization is legitimate before they donate money.

Tips for donating safely

Follow these tips before making a charitable donation:

- **Always verify.** Scammers use names that sound like well-known charities to confuse people. Fake charity promoters may use emails, fake websites, or altered or "spoofed" caller ID to make it look like a real charity is calling to solicit donations. Potential donors should ask the fundraiser for the charity's name, website and mailing address so they can independently confirm the information. Use the [TEOS tool](#) to verify if an organization is a legitimate tax exempt charity.
- **Be cautious** about how a donation is requested. Never work with charities that ask for donations by giving numbers from a gift card or by wiring money. That's a scam. It's safest to pay by credit card or check — and only after verifying the charity is real.
- **Don't share too much information.** Scammers are on the lookout for both money and personal information. Never disclose Social Security numbers, credit card numbers, personal identification numbers or passwords.
- **Don't give in to pressure.** Scammers often pressure people into making an immediate payment. In contrast, legitimate charities are happy to get a donation at any time. Donors should not feel rushed.

Taxpayers who encounter a fake or suspicious charity should see the FBI's resources on [charity and disaster fraud](#).

Claim a deduction

Taxpayers who give money or goods to a charity can claim a deduction if they itemize deductions, but these donations count only if they go to a qualified tax exempt organization recognized by the IRS.

More information

- [National Center for Disaster Fraud](#)
- DisasterAssistance.gov
- [Dirty-Dozen](#)

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