

We're Looking Out For You



Pinellas County Consumer Protection
www.pinellascounty.org/consumer
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Tips on Giving- Charitable Donations

Giving to a worthy cause can be rewarding, but it's important to know who you're giving to and how the money will be used.

- Only give what you can afford. Don't feel obligated to give to every organization requesting donations.
- Don't select a charity solely on its name. Many organizations have similar sounding names to well-know, reputable organizations, but may in fact be fraudulent.
- Don't let emotional appeals or photos persuade you into giving. Check it out before you give to make sure it's legitimate.
- Never send cash donations. Make contributions by check, made payable to the organization and not to an individual. Don't allow someone to come pick up money from you.
- You are not required to make a donation to enter a sweepstakes. Donating money does not increase your chance of winning.
- By Florida law you are entitle to receive a copy of the charity's financial report. Obtain a copy to determine how much of your contribution is going towards the cause and how much for administrative and fundraising costs.
- Be wary of charities that pop-up over night as a result of recent events.
- Verify that your gift is tax-deductible. Not all organizations soliciting for donations are true charities; therefore your donations may not be tax deductible. You can verify through the IRS website www.irs.gov .
- Don't be afraid to ask questions. It's your money, so make it count.
- Persons or organizations soliciting for charitable contributions are required to be registered with the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services.
- Visit <https://csapp.800helpfla.com/CSPublicApp/GiftGiversQuery/GiftGiversQuery.aspx> to search a charity in the Gift Giver's Guide-A Guide to Charitable Giving in Florida.