



# **Fraud Alert!**

## **Beware of Charity Scams!**

In the wake of a number of natural disasters, you have likely already received calls from organizations encouraging you to donate money to help those affected.

Although it would be nice if all of these solicitors were genuine, there are scam artists out there, pretending to work for charities, and trying to steal your money.

**The good news is that you can protect yourself!**

1. **Always** ask for a written description of programs, services and finances of the charity, such as an Annual Report. A legitimate charity will be happy to send this to you, while fraudulent solicitors will evade the question. Also ask to see proof of tax deductibility, such as a letter from the U.S. Treasury Department stating the organization falls under the IRS Code section 501(c)(3).
2. **You** know you are safe to donate to an organization if you have searched for their information and initiated the phone call. Be suspicious of charities that call you, rather than you contacting them.
3. **Don't** give into high pressure tactics and allow a runner to pick up your money. Reputable charities are just as happy to receive your gift next week.
4. **Don't** judge a charity by its impressive-sounding name. Many organizations have names similar to other well-known charities.
5. **Most** telephone appeals are made by paid salespeople in a for-profit company. In these solicitations, a high percentage of your donation, typically 80-90 percent, will go to the professional fund raiser and not to the charity.
6. **Never** give cash! Contribute by check, made out to the charity.
7. **Be** aware of emotional appeals and be careful if the charity won't tell you or send you written information on specific programs to solve the heartrending problem.

**Contact your local police agency if you think you are a victim of a crime.  
To contact the Weld County District Attorney's Office, call (970) 356-4010 ext. 4722.**