



Public Safety News & Tips Special Edition Charities

**Call 911
EMERGENCY
IN PROGRESS**

NON-EMERGENCY
Police (916)-774-5000
Extension 1

Police Department
1051 Junction Blvd.
Roseville C A 95678
(916) 774-5000
www.roseville.ca.us/police

**Abandoned Vehicle
Hotline**
(916) 746-1022

**Alarms/Alarm
Permits**
(916) 774-5093

Animal Control
(916)774-5090

**Community Events
& Neighborhood
Watch**
(916) 774-5050

Graffiti Abatement
(916) 746-1021

**Police news & crime
alert emails:**
[www.roseville.ca.us/
enotify](http://www.roseville.ca.us/enotify)

RCONA
(Roseville Coalition of
Neighborhood
Associations)
www.RCONA.org



A Few Facts on Charities

During the holiday season many people open up their hearts and wallets to make a donation. Some want to make a donation for tax purposes, and it must be completed by December 31. However, you also want to make sure the money you give does the most good. Here are some basic tips on donations to charities by the Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance:



- **Do not give cash.** Always make contributions by check to the name of the tax-exempt charity. Never give out your credit card information to a solicitor.
- **Keep records of your donations** (receipts, canceled checks, and bank statements) so you can document your charitable giving at tax time.
- **Don't be fooled** by names that look impressive or that closely resemble the name of a well-known organization.
- **Do not make a donation if you feel uncomfortable about the pitch. Be wary of high-pressure solicitors.** Responsible fundraisers will not pressure a donor to give on the spot. You can mail your donation after getting more information.
- **Check out the organization** with the Better Business Bureau and/or one of the national charity monitoring organizations (see below).

Check out the Charity

If you decide to make a donation to a charity this year, make sure you know something about them. There are several national charity-monitoring organizations that can help you evaluate a charity.

- **GuideStar** (www.guidestar.org) lists 1.8 million nonprofits in its database, all of which have met IRS criteria for exempt organizations.
- **BBB Wise Giving Alliance** (www.bbb.org and www.give.org) Has guide for donors, charity evaluations and various "tips" publications for wise giving.
- **Charity Navigator** (www.charitynavigator.org) is an independent American nonprofit corporation that evaluates charities in the United States. Charity Navigator currently evaluates more than 5,400 charities in the United States
- **Charity Watch** (www.charitywatch.org) The **American Institute of Philanthropy (AIP)**, now known as **Charity Watch**, is a nonprofit organization, created to provide information about a charity's financial efficiency, accountability, governance, and fundraising.
- **California Attorney General** (www.ag.ca.gov) Audits charities. Provides "Guide to Charitable Giving for Donors."



Did you Know?

- More than 80% of the money raised by charities in this country comes from individuals.
- Credit card and other processing fees can eat up as much as 5% of your donation.
- Any charity whose administrative costs exceeds 25% should raise a red flag.
- Telemarketers asking for a donation will get a percentage of that donation.

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Special Edition on Charities

Victimization of Senior Citizens

Every year the Attorney General's office receives numerous complaints about fraudulent solicitation practices targeting seniors. Senior citizens must be especially vigilant. Here are some guidelines and tips:

- **Learn more about the organization and ask question to the solicitor (see below).**
- **Do not be afraid to say "no" to a solicitor or to hang up.**

- **Do not worry about being rude.**
- **Protect yourself by using caution every time you are contacted by a person who claims to be soliciting for charity.**
- **Contact organizations such as the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) that have developed programs to help seniors avoid exploitation (www.aarp.org)**

Checklist for Donors

The Attorney General of California has put out a "Guide to Charitable Giving for Donors." Here are some questions they recommend you ask the solicitor and other tips you need to consider before making a donation.

- **Ask if the solicitor works for a commercial fundraiser and is being paid to solicit.** By law, the commercial fundraiser must disclose the fact that the solicitation is being conducted by a commercial fundraiser.
- **Ask what percentage of donations being raised is paying for fundraising expenses.** California law requires fundraisers to disclose this fact, *if asked*, either orally or in writing.
- **Ask the solicitor how your donation will be distributed.** Ask how much will be used for the program you want to support and how much will cover the charity's administrative costs. Again, this disclosure is required under California law.
- **Ask for written information.** Confirm the charity's name, address, telephone number, proof of exempt status, and registration with the Attorney General.
- **Call the charity directly.** Find out if the organization exists and is aware

of the solicitation. Ask the charity to send you written information about its revenue expenses and programs.

- **Confirm a law enforcement agency appeal.** If the solicitor tells you the donation is for your local, police, fire, or other safety agency, check directly with the agency to ensure that it is actually participating in the fundraising appeal.
- **In case of threats or suspicious solicitation, hang up the phone, shut the door, or walk away.** Immediately report a threatening solicitation to the consumer fraud division of your local district attorney's office or local law enforcement agency. Call the Better Business Bureau (BBB) to report the name of the organization.
- **Avoid becoming the victim of solicitations that guarantee sweepstakes winnings in exchange for a contribution.** Legally, you never have to "donate" to be eligible to win a prize.



Did you know?

- Nearly one-eighth of all charities in the United States are registered in California.
- The Attorney General's web site offers a searchable database of registered charities (www.ag.ca.gov/charities/index.htm)



What is a Charity?

In California, "charities" is a term applied to tax-exempt, nonprofit public benefit corporations. This means the organization has been granted federal and state tax exemptions, has incorporated, or registered to do business in California, and is registered with the Attorney General's Registry of Charitable Trusts.

Resources: California Attorney General's Office, BBB Wise Giving Alliance,