

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection: On giving Tuesday, check before you donate

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MADISON – The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) and the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions (DFI) are reminding consumers to do their research on charities before making a contribution this holiday season.

“During the holidays, people are more vulnerable to charity scams,” said Lara Sutherlin, Administrator of DATCP’s Division of Trade and Consumer Protection. “There are many simple ways you can protect yourself from scammers and make sure you are donating to a legitimate charity.”

“With a little research and a few precautions, you can help ensure your donations go to organizations that are genuinely serving others,” said Patti Epstein, Administrator of DFI’s Division of Corporate and Consumer Services.

Consumers can protect themselves from charity scams by:

- Reviewing DFI’s webpage on charitable organizations, which includes tips for donors and a database of state-registered organizations: <http://www.wdfi.org/-CharitableOrganizations/default.htm>
- Visiting DATCP’s website for more information to protect yourself as you make your charitable donations: <https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Publications/-CharityRequests120.aspx>
- Researching charities at <https://www.charitynavigator.org/> or <http://give.org/>

- Avoiding phone calls that ask you to make an immediate donation. Take time to ask the caller for information about the organization, whether the donation is tax-deductible, and if you will get a receipt. Don't feel pressured by emotional appeals or urgent requests – a reputable charity will appreciate your donation just as much if you take time to do your homework first.
- Checking websites, emails, and texts. Watch for imposter websites by checking the spelling of the charity's name and web address. Do not click on emails, respond to text messages, or share information with senders you do not know.
- Writing a check out to the organization (not an individual), or using a credit card.

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