



DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

News Release

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For Immediate Release: November 25, 2009

News Release 2009-29

**ATTORNEY GENERAL PROVIDES TIPS
FOR CHARITABLE GIVING DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON**

HONOLULU – During the holiday season, consumers may notice an increase in requests for charitable donations. While the holiday season is a time for family, friends, and traditions, it can also be a time when unscrupulous individuals attempt to take advantage of the generosity of others. The Department of the Attorney General offers these suggestions to help consumers make the most of their charitable donations:

- Check out the charity before you donate. Charitable organizations are required to register with the Department of the Attorney General. A searchable public database is available at ag.ehawaii.gov/charity.
- Be aware that many fake charities use names that are very similar to those of legitimate charitable organizations.
- When approached in person for a donation, ask for identification and written information about the charity, including a physical address and how your donation will be used. If you have questions, contact the charity to verify that it is soliciting contributions.
- Don't give or send cash. For security and tax record purposes, contribute by check or credit card. If you use a check, write the official name of the charity on your check.
- Never give out personal information such as credit card or bank account numbers over the phone. Doing so may open the door to identity theft.

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- Be aware that charitable organizations may use professional fundraisers. Professional fundraisers are allowed to keep a portion of what they collect for charities. If you receive a telephone call asking for a donation on behalf of a charity, ask whether the caller is a professional fundraiser. If the answer is yes, ask how much of your donation the fundraiser or fundraising company will keep and how much will go to the charity.
- Confirm that your donation is tax-deductible. The IRS publishes a cumulative list of organizations eligible to receive tax-deductible charitable contributions (Publication 78). An online version of this publication is available at www.irs.gov/app/pub-78.
- Don't be pressured into making a donation. Legitimate organizations will be happy to answer questions and provide the information you need to make an informed donation.
- Check out charity information services such as the American Institute of Philanthropy (www.charitywatch.org), Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance (www.bbb.us/charity), and Charity Navigator (www.charitynavigator.org).

For more information, visit the Department of the Attorney General's website at www.hawaii.gov/ag/charities.

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