

## Charities & Charitable Giving

With the holiday season upon us, many people will donate money to charitable organizations. Unfortunately, it is also the season for deceptive and fraudulent solicitations.

The Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation offers the following tips for charitable giving:

- Never give to a charity that you don't know anything about.
- Don't feel pressured into giving on the spot. Always request written literature from solicitors before donating.
- Never give cash or provide credit card numbers to organizations you are unfamiliar with. Make contributions by check and make the check out to the charity, not to the individual collecting the donation.
- Keep records of all your donations (i.e. canceled checks) so you can document your charitable giving at tax time.
- Don't make assumptions when you hear words like "police" or "firefighter" in an organization's name. Although an organization claims it has local ties or works with local police or firefighters, it doesn't necessarily mean contributions will be used locally.
- If solicited in person, always ask to see the solicitor's identification.
- Be aware of statements such as "every penny will go to the charity." All charities have expenses, so check carefully and know where your money goes.

### For More Information on Charities and Charitable Giving:

Check with:

- The Better Business Bureau
- FTC Charity Checklist

Check to see that the charity is registered with the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office Non-Profit Organizations/ Public Charities Division.



Massachusetts law requires all public charities operating in Massachusetts to register and file annual reports with the Attorney General's Office. The Attorney General's Annual Filing Document Search website allows you to search for and access the annual reports of public charities filed with the AGO, as well as documents filed by professional fundraisers.