

# Tips for Giving Generously and Wisely to Veterans and Public Safety Groups

- While most charities are reputable and worthy of financial support from the public, a few charities operate outside the bounds of fairness. A charitable donation is a financial transaction - use the same consideration when making a donation as any other financial decision.
- **Check it Out:** when solicited for a donation, don't be afraid to ask questions, verify the name, address, or phone number of the charity or to ask whether the donation is tax deductible as a charitable contribution.
- **Ask Questions:** Ask how much will go to the charity, and how much goes to fundraising, administrative and general expenses. Ask whether the donation will be used in the local area, and ask for specific information on how donations will be used to help area veterans, police, or firefighters
- **Take Your Time:** Do not be afraid to hang up the phone, close the door, or walk away from a solicitor especially if you feel pressured to give immediately. You can always take time to research the charity.
  - With veterans, police, and fire organizations, remember that not all solicitors in uniform are necessarily veterans or first responders. The Attorney General's Office has seen reports of charities raising funds for military veterans with solicitors in military uniform.
  - Think twice before supporting a charitable group that has not registered with the Attorney General's Office or is not current on its filings at [www.charities.ago.state.ma.us](http://www.charities.ago.state.ma.us)
  - Do a quick check online with independent organizations such as [www.charitynavigator.org](http://www.charitynavigator.org), [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org), or [www.give.org](http://www.give.org), to learn about how effective a charity is, what percentage of funds raised go to administrative expenses and fundraising, and whether complaints have been made about the charity.

Any consumer or retailer with questions, concerns, or complaints about a charity may contact the Attorney General's Office Non-Profit Organizations/ Public Charities Division at (617) 963-2315.

