

Secretary Of State Issues Guidance For Florence Recovery Giving

By Administrator

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RALEIGH – North Carolina Secretary of State Elaine F. Marshall cautions that even as flooding from Florence worsens in some areas of the state the natural disaster may also spawn a wave of solicitations from fake charities. “As North Carolinians, we all want to reach out to help our neighbors who are suffering right now, we just need to make sure that our generosity counts,” Secretary Marshall advised Monday.

“It is always wise to give to established charities that you know – whose good works you’ve seen in your own community and that have resources in the affected regions to do the most good. The Salvation Army, the American Red Cross, the Food Bank of Central & Eastern NC are just a few examples, as well as The North Carolina Disaster Relief Fund, which addresses urgent needs in the wake of disasters.”

You can make sure your generosity gets to those in need by following a few basic tips:

- Watch out for groups mimicking the names of established, respected charities.
- If you get an unsolicited call, text or email from an organization, research that organization yourself online instead of clicking on links the organization provides. Also make your donations directly on the charity’s official website rather than clicking on a link in a text or email.
- Never give your credit card or bank account information over the phone or email.
- Be cautious about circulating GoFundMe pages appealing for donations. While many of these may be well-intentioned, it’s wise to consider which charities have the infrastructure, experience and resources on the ground to help the most people.
- Visit the Secretary of State’s Charitable Solicitation Licensing Division online at www.sosnc.gov/CSL/ to research charities registered with the Secretary of State’s Office, and download the Secretary of State’s Smart Donor Checklist for a handy list of suggested questions you should ask any charity that solicits you for contributions.
- Other good tools to check out charities include Charity Navigator, CharityWatch, the Better

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Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance, and Guidestar.

If you believe you have been contacted by a scam charity, please write down any information as soon as possible, or take a screen shot of the suspect solicitation, and then immediately contact the Secretary of State's Office or local law enforcement authorities. Charitable Solicitation Enforcement staff with the Secretary of State's Office can be reached by calling 1-888-830-4989 or by using the complaint form given on the Charities

section of the Department's website.