



*The District Attorney's  
Disaster Response Team says:*

## **DON'T BE A VICTIM!**

*Within days of Hurricane Katrina hitting the Gulf Coast, thousands of fraudulent Internet sites sprang up to appeal for donations for storm victims. Telemarketers and local scam artists are at work in Mobile County trying to get your charity dollars.*

*Make sure your donations go to legitimate charities.*

### **CHARITY SCAM PREVENTION CHECKLIST**

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#### **BEWARE OF ...**

- ✓ **Any charity new to relief efforts** that is suddenly soliciting for hurricane assistance.
- ✓ **Appeals that are long on emotion**, but short on details about what the charity will do to address the needs of victims and their families.
- ✓ **Cash donations:** Make a check or money order out to the name of the charitable organization, not to an individual collecting the donation.
- ✓ **On-line donations.** Never respond to unsolicited e-mail messages asking you for money – they are likely to be fake. Most charities do not request donations by e-mail. Never open an attachment or click on a link provided in such an e-mail -- it may direct you to a false website that looks legitimate but isn't. This can allow hackers to collect personal information and expose your computer to viruses and other security breaches.
- ✓ **Excessive pressure** for on-the-spot donations.
- ✓ **Requests for your personal information**, such as your bank account or credit card number by a telephone solicitor or email solicitation.

- ✓ **Charities that are reluctant to provide written information** that describes the charity's programs and finances: Ask for the charity's latest annual report and financial statements.
- ✓ **Offers of charitable donations to you** in exchange for your personal information.

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### **CHECK THEM OUT**

#### **Wise Giving Alliance of the Better Business Bureau**

[http://www.give.org/news/disaster\\_tips.asp](http://www.give.org/news/disaster_tips.asp)

**Better Business Bureau of South Alabama**  
(800) 544-4714

#### **Scambusters**

[www.scambusters.org/hurricanekatrinascams.html](http://www.scambusters.org/hurricanekatrinascams.html)

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### **REPORT SUSPECTED FRAUD**

Mobile County District Attorney  
(251) 574-8400

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*The District Attorney's Disaster Response Team is a network of Mobile County's leading financial institutions, business and professional organizations, government agencies and law enforcement officials working together to help protect victims of Hurricane Katrina.*

*We urge all our citizens to remain vigilant, to protect themselves, and to report all suspected crime as we repair and rebuild Mobile County in the coming months.*

**-- District Attorney John M. Tyson Jr.**