



## **It is the Season of Good Will, Give Wisely**

For most people, the holidays are a time for generosity and sharing. Unfortunately, to the scam artists, these kind feelings are just another opportunity to try and skim more than their share off the top. GIVE, BUT GIVE WISELY.

Do not provide your credit card information to anyone who solicits you by phone, no matter how convincing or heart-wrenching the appeal is. Also beware of scams that use spam: an email solicitation may direct you to what appears to be a legitimate web site for a charity, when in fact it is a very good imitation. Do your own research to ensure that you are giving to a real charity.

Some companies promote causes by contributing a percentage of product sales to a specific charity. Be careful about buying a product just because some of your dollars are going to a charity. The product may be overpriced and/or the contribution may be very small. You can always just contact the charity independently to make a direct contribution.

Ask questions. If you are not familiar with a charity, get its full name, address, and telephone number. Many organizations have names that are very similar to well-known charities.

Find out how your donation will be distributed. How much will go to the program you want to support and how much will cover the charity's administrative and telemarketing costs?

Most worthwhile charities do not try to entice you to give by telling you that you have won a prize when you haven't even entered a contest.

Some dishonest individuals may avoid doing any business through the mail to avoid federal prosecution under postal statutes. Instead, they will insist on using a private courier service or picking up your check themselves.

**WRITE TO: Greg Abbott, Office of the Attorney General, PO Box 12548,  
Austin, TX 78711-2548 • (800) 252-8011 • [www.oag.state.tx.us](http://www.oag.state.tx.us)**

Get information in writing from the charity before giving, including an annual report or other financial information.

Do not give cash. Write a check in the name of the charity, or if you are giving other property, ask for a receipt.

Consult an attorney before making a significant gift, whether making such a gift outright, by will, or by trust.

REMEMBER, NO LEGITIMATE BUSINESS WILL ASK FOR YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER, BANK INFORMATION OR OTHER PERSONAL INFORMATION VIA WEB SITE OR EMAIL. Make your generous gifts count: give wisely and with care.

Have a wonderful holiday season.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Abbott". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Greg Abbott,  
Attorney General of Texas

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