5 DONATING MISTAKES

BBB reminds consumers to be on guard when reacting to disaster deadlines. Be sure to avoid the following five mistakes when making disaster relief donations:

#1 | MAKING A DONATION DECISION BASED SOLELY ON CHARITY’S NAME

Charities ranging from well-known emergency relief organizations to organizations experienced in reconstruction will likely be soliciting for various relief assistance efforts. Make sure the appeal specifies how the charity will help. If it does not, visit the charity’s website. Also, watch out for charity names that include the name of the disaster — it could be a start-up group with little experience or a questionable effort seeking to gain confidence through its title.

#2 | COLLECT CLOTHING AND GOODS WITHOUT VERIFYING ITEMS CAN BE USED

Unless you have verified that a charity is in need of specific items and has a distribution plan in place, collecting clothing, food and other goods may end up being a wasted effort. Relief organizations often prefer to purchase goods near the location of the disaster to help speed delivery and avoid expensive long distance freight costs. Also, sending non-essential items may actually slow down the charity’s ability to address urgent needs.

#3 | SENDING DONATIONS TO INEXPERIENCED RELIEF EFFORTS

Good intentions alone are not enough to carry out relief activities effectively. If the charity has not previously been involved in disaster relief, or does not have experience in assisting the overseas nation(s) that have been impacted, this likely will hamper their ability to work well in the affected areas.

#4 | RESPONDING TO ONLINE & SOCIAL MEDIA APPEALS WITHOUT CHECKING

Don’t let your guard down just because the appeal is online. Don’t assume that since a third-party blog, website or friend recommended a relief charity that it has been thoroughly vetted. Check out the charity’s website on your own.

#5 | DONATING WITHOUT DOING YOUR HOMEWORK

Find out if a charity meets recognized accountability standards. If you want assurance that the charity is transparent, accountable, and well managed, see if it meets the BBB Wise Giving Alliance’s 20 “Standards for Charity Accountability” by visiting give.org.

For more information about how to be a savvy consumer go to bbb.org. To report fraudulent activity or unscrupulous business practices, please call the BBB Hotline: (903) 581-8373.