



August 28, 2009

Media Release

State Warns Consumers of Phony Charity Solicitations

Reno – The Nevada Department of Public Safety (DPS) and the Nevada Fight Fraud Taskforce are warning consumers that the number of fraudulent charitable phone solicitations that are on the rise.

DPS has received complaints from consumers in the Reno area who are concerned about recent telemarketing calls they have received. The callers are soliciting money on behalf of the Department of Public Safety.

“The Department of Public Safety is a government agency and does not solicit charitable donations,” said Director Jerry Hafen. “We want consumers to be wary of these calls and make sure they research the charity before handing over any money.”

Before making any charitable contribution, consumers are encouraged to take the following steps:

- Check the charity out at CharityNavigator.org and also with your local Better Business Bureau before donating.
- Don't fall for an official-sounding name. Scammers often try to trick consumers by using names that are very similar to those of well-known charities.
- Get the specifics. If the telemarketer can't tell you what the charity will do for its recipients, hang up the phone.
- Find out how much of your donation actually goes to the people in need.
- Don't fall for high-pressure sales tactics. The scammer may try to convince you that it's urgent you donate right away. Don't do it; there's always time to think on it for 24 hours or more. Ask the solicitor for a name and number at which they can be reached.
- Ask that more information be mailed to you so you can research the charity before you decide. If the caller refuses, hang up.

- **Never give out your personal information - credit card or bank account numbers, social security numbers, etc. - to someone who calls you.**

If you think you've been contacted by a bogus charity telemarketer, report it your local police department or to the Department of Public Safety at <http://dps.nv.gov/ReportSuspiciousActivity.htm> or Nevada Department of Public Safety's Investigation Division, Tip Hotline at 866-273-7678.

For more information about DPS, visit <http://dps.nv.gov/>.

The Fight Fraud Taskforce is a consumer protection coalition comprised of state and municipal agencies and private sector specialists. The Taskforce maintains the website <http://fightfraud.nv.gov>, which includes extensive tips on how to prevent fraud and provides downloadable complaint forms to help you respond effectively if you become a victim.

The Taskforce is also hosting free seminars about fraud and deceptive trade through the library system, senior centers, and other community groups meetings. Those seminars are listed on the events page of the website at <http://fightfraud.nv.gov/calendar.htm>.