



Town of Vienna, Virginia Police Department Media Information Release

Holiday Season Charitable Donation Tips

The Town of Vienna and surrounding areas have many generous, caring citizens who want to make charitable donations to organizations in our area and throughout the United States that raise money to support important research and community programs.

Unfortunately, there are also many fraudulent "charities" who want to take advantage of your goodwill. Quite often these are folks who are pretending to be from law enforcement related organizations. It is important then, that you do your research before making a donation.

If you are solicited for charitable donations, please remember the following tips:

* You do not have to give money to any organization you do not feel comfortable supporting. Do not give in to pressure even when solicitors make highly emotional appeals. Go to the following website or call and check on the validity of any charitable organization to ensure they are legitimate:

Virginia Office of Consumer Affairs <http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/consumers/> or
toll-free (800) 552-0063 or (804) 786-2042.

Or www.give.org

* Never provide your credit card or bank information over the telephone or online, especially when you did not originate the call or email.

* Ask for printed information to review or a call back number before making your decision.

* Most independent police organizations such as the **Vienna Police Association** only solicit donations by mail. If someone stating they are a police charity or organization contacts you by telephone or email, simply ask for printed information. Some organizations purport themselves to be a supporter of police and are actually profit making firms and donate very little (if any) to any legitimate police organization. **The Vienna Police Association is conducting a donation campaign during the coming weeks via U.S. Mail. No one will contact you by phone or email during this campaign.**

- * If you are solicited in person, ask for identification from both the solicitor and the charity.
- * Know your charity. Ask questions about the organization's mission and how donations are used. You may want to know whether the donation supports local efforts or can be used nationwide.
- * Request proof that your contribution will be tax deductible.
- * Never make cash donations. Write a check to the organization and not to the person collecting the donation.
- * If you receive an unsolicited e-mail requesting a donation, do not respond. If you make a donation through an organization's Web site, check for "https" in its Web address to help determine if the site is secure.
- * In a time of crisis such as a natural or manmade disaster, be wary of scammers using it as an opportunity to make money.

**For Further Information please contact
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