



IR-2015-114: IRS Warns Consumers of Possible Scams Relating to South Carolina Flood Victim Relief

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IRS Warns Consumers of Possible Scams Relating to South Carolina Flood Victim Relief

WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service today issued a consumer alert about possible fake charity scams emerging due to severe flooding this month in South Carolina and neighboring states.

"When making donations to assist flood victims in South Carolina and elsewhere, taxpayers should take steps to ensure their hard-earned money goes to legitimate and currently eligible charities," said IRS Commissioner John Koskinen. "IRS.gov has the tools taxpayers need to check out the status of charitable organizations."

Following major disasters, it is common for scam artists to impersonate charities to get money or private information from well-intentioned taxpayers.

Such fraudulent schemes may involve contact by telephone, social media, email or in-person solicitations.

The IRS cautions people wishing to make disaster-related charitable donations to avoid scam artists by following these tips:

- To help disaster victims, donate to recognized

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charities.

- Be wary of charities with names that are similar to familiar or nationally known organizations. Some phony charities use names or websites that sound or look like those of respected, legitimate organizations. The IRS website at IRS.gov has a search feature, [Exempt Organizations Select Check](#), through which people may find legitimate, qualified charities; donations to these charities may be tax-deductible. Legitimate charities may also be found on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) website at fema.gov.
- Don't give out personal financial information — such as Social Security numbers or credit card and bank account numbers and passwords — to anyone who solicits a contribution from you. Scam artists may use this information to steal your identity and money.
- Don't give or send cash. For security and tax record purposes, contribute by check or credit card or another way that provides documentation of the gift.
- If you plan to make a contribution for which you would like to claim a deduction, see IRS [Publication 526, Charitable Contributions](#), to read about the kinds of organizations that can receive deductible contributions.

Bogus websites may solicit funds for disaster victims. Such fraudulent sites frequently mimic the sites of, or use names similar to, legitimate charities, or claim to be affiliated with legitimate charities in order to persuade members of the public to send money or provide personal financial information that can be used to steal identities or financial resources.

Additionally, scammers often send email that steers the recipient to bogus websites that appear to be affiliated with legitimate charitable causes.

Taxpayers suspecting disaster-related frauds by email should visit IRS.gov and search for the keywords "[Report Phishing](#)."

More information about tax scams and schemes may be found at IRS.gov using the keywords "scams and schemes."

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