

Give Wisely!

There are many things you can do to ensure your donation goes where you want it to go.

- Take your time.**
Don't give in to pressure from fundraisers who insist that you contribute immediately. Ask for information and decide later.
- Be informed.**
Get as much information as you can. Find out if the charity is registered under the *Income Tax Act* and view its annual information return by visiting the CRA's web site at:
www.cra.gc.ca/charities
- Plan your giving.**
Carefully choose the charities that are important to you and donate to them. You may even be able to do this through a payroll plan at your workplace.
- Don't give cash.**
Write a cheque and make it payable to the charity.
- Trust your instincts.**
If something doesn't seem right, politely decline to give.

For more information

Canada Revenue Agency

The CRA registers qualifying organizations as charities, gives technical advice on operating a charity, and handles audit and compliance activities. Registered charities have to file information returns with the CRA every year and have to meet certain requirements concerning their expenditures and activities. To learn more about a registered charity:

1-800-267-2384 (English toll-free)
1-888-892-5667 (bilingual toll-free)
www.cra.gc.ca/charities

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations Registry of Joint Stock Companies

All businesses operating in the Province of Nova Scotia must register with the Registry of Joint Stock Companies. A non-profit organization can also "register" or be incorporated under the *Societies Act*. These organizations must file financial statements and information about their directors every year. To find out if a society is registered in Nova Scotia:

1-800-225-8227 (toll free)
www.rjsc.ca

To file a complaint about fraudulent fundraising activities call your local police or **Project Phonebusters** at:

1-888-495-8501 (toll free)



Giving to Charity

A Donor's Guide



Will you donate?

Charitable donations are an important source of funding for many worthwhile groups. Unfortunately, there are people who pretend to raise money for charity but keep the donations for themselves. Once a donation is made, there is usually nothing you can do to get your money back.

Ask a few important questions before you make your decision to donate.

Ask yourself...

Have I heard of this charity before?

Beware of names that are similar to well-known charities, but that are not quite the same. Scam artists will not hesitate to use similar wording or logos to make you believe you are giving to an established charitable organization.

Does the fundraiser seem informed?

The person asking for your support should be able to provide details on the charity and on how your donation will be used. Ask if there is a phone number or website that you can use to get more information.

Am I confident that my donation will be used for charitable purposes?

Don't feel pressured to give. It is your money and you should take time to make an informed decision. Give when you know your money will help the causes or charities that mean the most to you.

Ask the fundraiser...

Can I get a tax receipt?

Supporting a charity can reduce the amount of tax you have to pay. However, only charities registered under the *Income Tax Act* can issue official donation receipts. Ask for the group's charitable registration number and search the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) website at www.cra.gc.ca/charities to find out if the organization is registered.

How much of the donation will be used to help others, and how much will be used for administrative or overhead costs?

You have a right to know how your donation will be used. Registered charities must report on their activities and expenditures every year by filing information returns with the CRA. If the fundraiser does not have this information, you can view the charity's information on the CRA's website.

Registered and unregistered groups

A group may be "registered" with government as a charity, society, or both.

The Province of Nova Scotia, through the Registry of Joint Stock Companies, incorporates non-profit *societies*. Organizations do not have to incorporate, but there are legal benefits for those that do. You can get information about incorporated societies from the Registry of Joint Stock Companies on its web site or from the toll-free number on the reverse.

An organization can also register as a *charity* with the CRA. Again, this is not mandatory. There are many worthwhile groups that are not registered, including schools and community groups. However, only registered charities can issue official donation receipts that you can use to claim tax credits. You can find out if an organization is a registered charity by using the CRA's internet address or toll-free numbers found on the reverse.