

Security Spotlight

An Informational Guide for Securitas USA Clients and Employees



December 2014

Securitas Security Services, USA, Inc.

Number 129

Holiday Giving: Be Generous Be Helpful Be Safe



Be of good cheer, the most festive time of the year is nearly here! It is time to break out the wrapping paper and bows and dash off to the mall for that perfect gift. Truly this is a season of giving and Americans are among the most generous people in the world (according to a poll conducted by The Guardian newspaper¹). The holiday season is an especially important time for charities as the largest portion of their annual collections is given at this time of the year². But you should exercise caution when making a charitable donation. Some thieves masquerade as Good Samaritans.

Most charitable institutions are staffed by honest, caring individuals and the majority of the money they raise is used to benefit people in need. However, there have been cases where avaricious individuals have used donations to enrich themselves. There are also scammers who solicit contributions for fake charities. Again, these greedy Grinches are few and far between, but they are out there and you need to beware of them. Securitas encourages all of our employees to take our core values of Integrity, Vigilance, and Helpfulness to heart. In that spirit, Securitas hopes that you will all support worthy charities and help protect your families and communities from unscrupulous fakers. To assist you in spotting the wolves amongst the charitable lambs, here are a few useful tips that you can share with your family and friends.

How to Spot a Charity Scam

Here are some tips from the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to help you give safely to trustworthy causes.

- Beware of a solicitor who will not provide detailed information about the charity's identity, mission, costs, and how the donation will be used.
- Ask for detailed information about the charity, including name, address, and telephone number. Look up the phone number to see if it matches and then call the charity. Find out if the organization is aware of the solicitation and has authorized the use of its name.
- Get the exact name of the organization and do some research. Searching the name of the organization online – especially with the word “complaint(s)” or “scam” – is one way to learn about its reputation.
- Check out the charity by contacting the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance (<http://www.bbb.org/us/charity>), Charity Navigator (<http://www.charitynavigator.org/>), GuideStar (<http://www.guidestar.org/>), or the American Institute of Philanthropy's Charity Watch (<http://www.charitywatch.org/>).
- Do not provide your credit or check card number, bank account number, or any personal information until you have thoroughly researched the charity.
- Refuse any telephoned request for cash or to wire money.

- If the solicitor thanks you for a previous pledge that you cannot recall making there is a good chance they are trying to scam you.
- If they use high pressure tactics to try to get you to make a pledge before you have had time to think it over.
- If you are offered a guaranteed sweepstakes winning in exchange for a contribution, you can bet it is a scam.
- Be wary of charities that spring up too suddenly in response to current events and natural disasters. Even if they are legitimate, they probably don't have the infrastructure to get the donations to the affected area or people.

The Salvation Army asks that you be cautious of bell-ringing impostors on the sidewalks. Real solicitors will have all-red kettles on a black stand with a small sign sporting the organization's logo and their kettles will be padlocked. Also, check with store managers or local police to see if the solicitor has been given permission to be there. Legitimate Salvation Army bell ringers are only in locations where they have been permitted to be stationed. So be sure to check for authenticity before you toss your money in the kettle.

As a Securitas officer, and a good citizen, you should keep your eyes and ears open and your wallet shut until you are positive that a solicitor is legitimate. Report to the police any suspicious appearance or activity of persons soliciting for charitable donations. Not only will you be preventing a possible crime, but you may also be helping the genuine charities collect more by preventing donations from being hijacked by fakers.

Helpfulness: The Gift That Can Not Be Stolen

Giving does not have to be limited to money. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/volun.nr0.htm>) around 62.6 million Americans worked as volunteers in 2013. The Corporation for National & Community Service (<http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/>) statistics reveal that Americans donated 7.9 billion hours of their time last year. Top activities were fundraising or selling items to raise money; collecting, preparing, distributing, or serving food; engaging in general labor or transportation; and tutoring or teaching.

As a Securitas officer, helpfulness is one of your core values and volunteer work is a way to give that is more meaningful, and often more helpful, than writing out a check. Volunteers are critical to connecting people and strengthening our communities. When you contribute your money to a charity it has an important effect on the lives of the people the charity serves, but when you volunteer your efforts have an enduring effect on the people, the community, and the charitable organization that can far exceed the worth of a

financial contribution. The Points of Light organization (http://www.pointsoflight.org/sites/default/files/site-content/files/social_impact_of_volunteerism_pdf.pdf) has found that volunteering:

- makes a significant contribution to the global economy
- enhances the social connections between different sectors, and builds bridges between governments, businesses, and employees
- helps build a cohesive, safer, and stronger community and stimulates people to be more active in civic affairs
- delivers some part of public services, encourages more people to work in the public sector, and helps raise the educational performance of youth
- has positive effects on volunteers self-esteem, enhances various skills and capacities, expands career paths, and fosters better physical and mental health

The Natural Urge to Give

Numerous scientific studies and experiments have shown that altruism is a natural trait of human beings. The urge to give and help is a potent force that has improved lives throughout the world. But the need for generosity is still great. Despite the enormous progress that has been made, economic calamities, natural and manmade disasters, and just plain old bad luck still plague billions of people. Unfortunately, the criminal element in society seeks to take advantage of our good nature for their selfish greed. But, there are ways to give safely of both your money and time. You can give financial support to worthy causes, just be sure to check them out first. And you can give of yourself, your time and talents, to continue making the world better for everyone.

More Information on Safe Giving and Helping

Besides the website links already cited in this article, you can find more tips on how to safely contribute to charities at these websites.

Wikihow, <http://www.wikihow.com/Give-Charity-Donations-Safely>

The Federal Bureau of Investigation,

http://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/2006/december/holiday_scams121106

The Federal Trade Commission,

<http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/feature-0011-charity-scams>

You can find more information on volunteering at the following websites. You can also speak to your community and local leaders to find more localized volunteer opportunities.

Volunteer.gov, <http://www.volunteer.gov/>

VolunteerMatch, <https://www.volunteermatch.org/>

United We Serve, www.serve.gov

Habitat for Humanity,

http://www.habitat.org/getinv/volunteer_programs.aspx

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For more information, contact your Securitas USA supervisor or account manager