

Karima M. Woods, Commissioner

DISB CONSUMER ALERT

Beware of Ukrainian Crisis Charity Scams

The District of Columbia Department of Insurance, Securities and Banking (DISB) is warning District consumers to be on guard against Ukrainian crisis charity scams.

How Is The Scam Perpetrated?

Scammers on social media are taking advantage of people's good natures and desire to help those affected by the war in Ukraine by steering them to sites where they can send their money to help people desperately in need of food, shelter, medical care and clothing. However, the supposed charity to which you send your money may not be legitimate; instead, it could be an elaborate scam run by fraudsters. Scammers are also spoofing charitable websites and sending emails and text messages that appear genuine. While charitable giving, especially in a time of crisis, is a noble and compassionate act, you should be on guard for possible scams.

Ways To Avoid Becoming A Victim Of A Ukrainian Crisis Charity Scam

Here are some ways to safeguard sending money intended to help victims of the Ukrainian crisis from getting into the hands of scammers:

1. Be cautious of charities that have turned up since the invasion began.
2. Research the charity online using resources such as the Better Business Bureau's (BBB) Wise Giving Alliance ([give.org](https://www.bbb.org/give)) and verify that the charity meets BBB Charity Standards.
3. Be suspicious of high-pressure pitches and requests to wire your money right away.
4. Get specific responses from the charity about exactly how your donation will be used. Vague responses are often indicative of a scam.
5. Confirm with the organization that it can get your donation overseas and into the hands of the intended recipients, notwithstanding Ukraine's severe travel restrictions.
6. If charitable organizations or individuals you do not know contact you by phone, unsolicited emails, or text messages for donations and request your credit card information, bank account information, or other personally identifiable information, do not provide it.
7. If a charity requests that you make your donation using cash, gift cards, bank account debit card, Bitcoin, or money wires, do not provide this form of payment.

If you are solicited through an email that seems suspicious, DO NOT click on any links in the email. If you are directed to a website, type in the web address rather than use links. And remember, online search engines are an excellent tool to use for researching the charity and obtaining its correct web address, telephone number and street address.

Report Fraud

If you believe you have been the victim of a charitable donation scam or other financial fraud, you may file a report with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://www.reportfraud.ftc.gov) or call the FTC's Consumer Response Center at 877-382-4357. You may also contact the DISB Enforcement and Consumer Protection Division at 202-727-8000.

About DISB

The mission of the [Department of Insurance, Securities and Banking \(DISB\)](#) is three-fold: (1) cultivate a regulatory environment that protects consumers and attracts and retains financial services firms to the District; (2) empower and educate residents on financial matters; and (3) provide financing for District small businesses.

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