

# FTC Consumer Alert

Federal Trade Commission ■ Bureau of Consumer Protection ■ Division of Consumer & Business Education

## Wise Giving:

### Helping Victims of the Colorado Movie Theater Shooting

If you're thinking about donating to the victims and families of the Aurora, Colorado, movie theater shooting, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the nation's consumer protection agency, has tips to help you donate wisely.

**Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper** and the **Community First Foundation** have established the Aurora Victim Relief Fund to meet immediate and long-term needs of victims and their families. Donations are being accepted through **GivingFirst.org** – a program of the Foundation. Visit [GivingFirst.org](http://GivingFirst.org) to learn how various nonprofit organizations are offering direct support to those affected.

Unfortunately, legitimate charities face competition from fraudsters who either solicit for bogus charities or aren't entirely honest about how a so-called charity will use your contribution. It's wise to be wary of charities that spring up overnight in connection with current events, like the theater shooting.

Urgent appeals for aid that you get in person, by phone or mail, by e-mail, on websites, or on social networking sites may not be on the up-and-up. The agency's **Charity Checklist** has tips for guidance on donating wisely. If you are asked to contribute to a charity, the FTC recommends that you:

- Ask for the name of the charity if the telemarketer does not provide it promptly;
- Ask what percentage of your donation will support the cause described in the solicitation;
- Verify that the charity has authorized the solicitation;
- Do not provide any credit card or bank information until you have reviewed all information from the charity and made the decision to donate;
- Ask for a receipt showing the amount of the contribution and stating that it is tax deductible; and
- Avoid cash gifts. For security and tax record purposes, it's best to pay by check – made payable to the beneficiary, not the solicitor.

For more information, visit [ftc.gov/charityfraud](http://ftc.gov/charityfraud).

The FTC works to prevent fraudulent, deceptive and unfair business practices in the marketplace and to provide information to help consumers spot, stop and avoid them. To file a complaint or get free information on consumer issues, visit [ftc.gov](http://ftc.gov) or call toll-free, 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357); TTY: 1-866-653-4261. Watch a new video, *How to File a Complaint*, at [ftc.gov/video](http://ftc.gov/video) to learn more. The FTC enters consumer complaints into the Consumer Sentinel Network, a secure online database and investigative tool used by hundreds of civil and criminal law enforcement agencies in the U.S. and abroad.

July 2012

[ftc.gov](http://ftc.gov)