

Charity Scams

The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke would like to advise individuals in the community that there is an increase in the number of charity scams in and around the territory. “Bogus charities often use names that are very close to the names of legitimate and respected charities. The end of the year is the peak season for charity appeals. It also is the peak season for the bogus charity appeals.”

What often happens is that the business sends in bills for payment for advertising space in phone directories, yearbooks or other promotional materials in the name of charitable organizations. While occasionally the business does provide a small portion of the proceeds to a charity, often times the money is kept by the business that is operating a charity scam.

When being solicited for donations outside the community we would strongly encourage recommend that proper verifications are done and that the following tips are kept in mind:

- Ask for any information to be sent to you in writing. Ask how much of your gift will be used directly for the charity. Ask how much will go toward administrative costs. Legitimate charities have no problem giving you this information.
- Remember that the business could be misrepresenting a legitimate charity.
- Call the charity. Find out if they know about the appeal and have authorized it and what percentage of your donation they will receive from your donation. Perhaps there is a better way to give, where 100% of your donation will reach the charity.
- Ask if the charity is registered. Contact Revenue Canada at 1-800-267-2384.
- Ask them to give you the charitable tax number of the charity. Question any discrepancies.
- At the beginning of each year decide which charities you can afford to donate to - send your checks directly to their head office, and feel good about giving. When approached you can say that you have already given and leave it at that. Perhaps you will consider their appeal next year when you decide on the charities you can afford to give to.

If you suspect that you or your business has been a victim of fraud, please contact the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre at 1-888-495-8501 or the Kahnawà:ke Peacekeepers at 450-632-6505 to make a report.