Give Wisely to Natural Disaster Relief Funds

In the wake of recent natural disasters in the news, the Federal Trade Commission is urging people to be careful about where they send donations.

**How does this scam work?**

People are compelled to help when natural disasters and tragedies happen, but sometimes scammers exploit such events to take advantage of people's generosity.

Criminals create fake organizations or phony relief fund accounts to steal money intended for disaster relief and use it for other purposes. Current scams include a scam call from a "Federal agency" offering you a $9K grant or any email that comes from a redcross.net address.

**How can I protect myself?**

Rule out anyone who asks you to send cash, pay with a gift card or wire money.

Donate to charities you know and trust, and be wary of charities or relief funds that seem to have sprung up overnight in connection with recent events.

You can research charities with the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance, Charity Navigator, Charity Watch or GuideStar. Don't assume charity-related messages posted on social media are legitimate without doing your own research.

**What if I'm a victim?**

If you think you've spotted a charity scam, report it at ftc.gov/complaint.

Always report all scams and fraud to your local law enforcement agency's non-emergency number. If you believe someone is in danger, call 911.

Report all scams and financial abuse to the state attorney general, and file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission at ftc.gov/complaint.