

# CONSUMER ALERT

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

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## Consumer Alert: Waukesha Donors Should Watch for Fundraising Scam Attempts

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MADISON, Wis. – Many individuals across Wisconsin want to donate in the wake of the tragedy unfolding in Waukesha. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is urging donors to do their research before sending money to a charity claiming to help victims in Waukesha.

“At DATCP and across Wisconsin, we are saddened by the tragedy that has unfolded in Waukesha,” said Lara Sutherlin, Administrator, Division of Trade and Consumer Protection. “Donors are generously giving to individuals and organizations to support the victims, but, unfortunately, scammers have been known to take advantage of these types of events. Donors should use caution when making donation decisions.”

**Avoid fake charity schemes** by watching for signs of imposters, like high-pressure pitches, copycat names, and newly established organizations. Website addresses may be nearly identical to those of major established charities, so pay close attention to the wording. Keep in mind that most legitimate charity websites end in “.org” rather than “.com.” Donate to established organizations. You can look up charities by name at [www.charitynavigator.org](http://www.charitynavigator.org) or [www.give.org](http://www.give.org).

**Do not donate cash**, through cash apps, or by wiring money to people or organizations you do not know. It is impossible to reverse these transactions. Be suspicious of high-pressure pitches and requests for cash-like payments.

**Scrutinize donations through “crowdfunding” sites** and understand that scammers may set up fake profiles and donation pages. Review the site’s safety and security policies before making a payment. While these sites typically have safeguards in place for users, understand that there is no way to guarantee that the information posted is completely accurate or truthful.

**Watch for malicious software**, and avoid clicking on attachments or links in social network messages, e-mails, or text messages that claim to have exclusive information or photos.

Under Wisconsin state law, most organizations soliciting charitable donations must register and file an annual report with the Department of Financial Institutions (DFI). To check if a charity is registered, visit the [DFI website](http://DFI website) or email: [DFICharitableOrgs@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DFICharitableOrgs@wisconsin.gov).

If you have been the victim of a scam, report it by filing a [complaint online](http://complaint online), sending an email to [DATCPHotline@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DATCPHotline@wisconsin.gov), or calling DATCP’s Consumer Protection Hotline at 1-800-422-7128.

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