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TN ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE ISSUES SCAM WARNING FOLLOWING TORNADO

Nashville- The powerful storm that moved through Middle Tennessee early Tuesday morning has been devastating, claiming the lives of our neighbors, and destroying personal property and businesses.

As cleanup efforts begin, the Tennessee Attorney General's Office wants to ensure that only legitimate businesses and charities are working alongside the many volunteers to clear debris, repair, and rebuild.

"These storms have devastated the lives and hopes of many. Our communities will step up and help. In fact, they are already doing so," said Attorney General Herbert H. Slatery III.

"Unfortunately, these events also attract opportunists who may appear willing to help but really just want to take advantage of the situation and make some quick money without delivering any products or services."

The Tennessee Attorney General's Office wants you to keep these tips in mind:

- Don't fall for high pressure sales tactics; urgency is a red flag
- Be wary of unknown out of state phone numbers
- Before hiring a contractor, verify proper licensing: verify.tn.gov

Charity fraud is another common scam that pops up in response to natural disasters. Scammers may solicit donations for tornado victims but pocket the money instead.

Charity scams commonly come in the form of a phone call but can also include email, websites or social media, and text messaging.

Signs of a charity scam may include:

- A "copy-cat" name that sound like reputable charity. Some scammers use names that closely resemble those of respected, legitimate organizations.
- Cash-only donations. Instead, make checks payable to the charitable organization and not to an individual collecting a donation.
- The caller refuses to disclose the organization's mission, or how the money will be used
- Lack of proof your contribution is tax deductible.



Herbert H. Slatery III Attorney General & Reporter

If contributing over the Internet, be sure the web site belongs to the charity to which you want to donate. Make sure that the website is secure, such as a web address that begins with “https:” and that it offers protection of your credit card number

Before donating, confirm you are dealing with a reputable charity through the Tennessee Division of Charitable Solicitations: <https://sos.tn.gov/charitable/>

Find a complete list of consumer disaster recovery tips here:

https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/attorneygeneral/documents/consumer/consumer_affairs/consumer_resources/Disaster-Recovery-Brochure.pdf

For more information on home repair and charity scams, click here: tn.gov/consumer

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