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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Beware of Charity Scams Amid Hurriance Sally Recovery



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody is urging Floridians to use caution when donating to help those impacted by Hurricane Sally. As the recovery gets underway, charitable donations may be vital in helping restore the areas destroyed by the Category 2 storm. Attorney General Moody asks Floridians to take steps to ensure their donations actually reach those who need assistance and do not go to scammers using the crisis to steal from good-hearted donors.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “Hurricane Sally ripped through the western part of the Florida Panhandle, leaving a path of destruction and flooding that will take some time to repair. Charitable donations will play an important role in the recovery efforts, and I am asking everyone giving to this worthy cause to please take steps to ensure donations go to those in need and not fraudsters selfishly exploiting the crisis.”

Anyone wishing to donate can follow these tips to help ensure donations are used to assist victims and communities recovering from Hurricane Sally:

- Be proactive and donate to a reputable organization, rather than waiting to be solicited;
- Research a charity using Charity Navigator and by checking with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services at FreshFromFlorida.com or 1(800) HELP-FLA, to determine whether the charity is registered to solicit donations in Florida;
- Avoid solicitors using high-pressure tactics or who hesitate to provide more information about a charitable organization;

- If donating online, be sure to confirm the identity of the recipient and be careful when providing any personal contact information;
- Be wary of charities with similar sounding names. Some phony charities may attempt to use names that resemble legitimate, well-known charities; and
- Call the Florida Attorney General's Office at 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance at 1(703) 276-0100 to determine if there are any complaints against a charity.

The state of emergency declared ahead of Hurricane Sally is still in effect and that means Florida's price gouging law still applies to anyone who sells essential commodities or provides essential services to our consumers. For more on spotting and reporting price gouging, click here.

Earlier this week, Attorney General Moody warned those impacted by Hurricane Sally of potential for scams and other forms of fraud. Noting that after a natural disaster, consumers should be wary of tree service scams, building and home repair scams, disaster relief scams and water testing and treatment scams.

Please report any scams to the Florida Attorney General's Office by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or file a complaint online at MyFloridaLegal.com. For more charity fraud tips and resources for consumers, please visit www.ftc.gov/charity.