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Scammers exploit compassion after hurricanes, wildfires, floods, or other disasters by pretending to collect donations or offer relief aid. They pose as charities, government agencies, or even victims – tricking you into sending money, gift cards, or personal info.

Trusted Resources

FTC – Donate Wisely and Avoid Charity Scams – How to verify legitimate charities and avoid fake ones

 <https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/giving-charity> 

FEMA – Disaster Fraud Tips – Official disaster assistance sources and how to report fraud

 <https://www.fema.gov/fact-sheet/disaster-fraud> 

USA.gov – Disaster Relief and Recovery – Verified links for recovery help and reporting scams

 <https://www.usa.gov/disaster-assistance> 

Recognizing & Responding Safely

Check before you give. Verify charities at CharityNavigator.org or Give.org.

Don't donate in cash, gift cards, or crypto. Use credit cards for chargeback protection.

Be wary of emotional appeals. Real charities share facts, not guilt trips.

Watch for copycats. Fake sites often mimic real charity names – double-check spelling and URLs.

Report scams. Forward charity fraud reports to ReportFraud.ftc.gov.

Sam's Tips

Good causes attract bad actors. Pause before giving – real organizations don't rush donations.

Go direct. Type the organization's web address yourself instead of clicking links.

Cross-check posts. Social media fundraisers are often fake – verify the organizer's profile or use GoFundMe's disaster-relief hub.

Give smart. If you want to help immediately, donate to vetted organizations like the Red Cross or Salvation Army – through their official sites.