



Hunterdon County Sheriff's Office

71 Main Street
PO Box 2900
Flemington, NJ 08822-2900
(908) 788-1166 Fax (908) 806-4624
www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/sheriff.htm

Frederick W. Brown
Sheriff

Frank J. Cordero
Undersheriff

Robert W. Smith
Undersheriff

Edward W. Davis
Chief Warrant Officer

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Sheriff Fred W. Brown Alerts Residents About Hurricane Ian Scams

Warns Of Fraudulent Charities Claiming To Help Victims

Sheriff Fred W. Brown is alerting residents about Hurricane Ida scams including fraudulent charities that trick consumers into donating funds to supposedly help those affected by the recent emergency and reminds resident that they should verify the charity and make sure the organization is registered before sharing any personal information or sending a donation.

Sheriff Brown said, "Each time there is an emergency, scammers use the opportunity to claim they are a legitimate organization set up to help those affected, but in reality, the money never reaches those who need it. Taking a few extra steps to verify an organization means that you and the people you are trying to help are protected."

To check if an organization is legitimate before donating, Consumer Protection recommends visiting:
<https://www.charitywatch.org/>

The Better Business Bureau warns consumers that fraudulent groups will often use a name similar to a reputable donation organization in order to confuse people.

When receiving emails, be wary of phony hyperlinks and 'phishing.' Phishing is an online scam that targets consumers by sending them an email that appears to be from a legitimate business, but in reality, is a scammer who then has your personal information and money.

Scammers also use text messaging and direct phone calls as well. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) advises using your smart phone 'block' feature if you receive a suspicious text message asking for any personal or financial information. If you receive a phone call, hang up immediately and if you can, block the number on your phone to prevent future calls from coming in.

"Scammers are relentless and being informed about how to protect yourself is the best way to avoid losing money and personal data," Sheriff Brown noted.

The Better Business Bureau also has a "[Scam Tracker](#)" which allows people to report a fraud or scam and gives information about current investigations.

"Reputable charities will be registered as a non-profit organization and doing a little bit of research means you can avoid being taken advantage of and donate to people who really do need help," Sheriff Brown concluded.

[The New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs](#) is another resource to help protect consumers from scammers and fraudulent charities.