

## Give.org and Better Business Bureau Advise Hurricane Donors

### Donors advised to support experienced disaster relief charities

BBB Wise Giving Alliance (Give.org) and the Better Business Bureau advise donors that charitable relief organizations are your best bet to provide emergency help for victims of Hurricane Florence. It's also important for contributors to ask about what activities their donations will fund.

"This is not amateur hour," notes Art Taylor, president and CEO of BBB Wise Giving Alliance. "Give.org has seen crowdfunding posts from individuals claiming to raise funds so they can deliver and distribute water, food, and flashlights to impacted areas. Even if sincere, such efforts may risk lives, complicate access by professional efforts and potentially divert donations that could be directed in more helpful ways."

"With such a devastating hurricane bearing down on the southeast coast of the United States, emotions are running high," Taylor said. "While we all want to help those in harm's way as soon as we can, donors should watch out for newly created organizations that emerge that are either inexperienced in addressing disasters or may be seeking to deceive donors at a vulnerable time."

BBB also expects to see price-gougers and "storm chasers" looking to make a quick buck off preparation and clean-up efforts.

### Consumers Beware of "Storm Chasers"

In the wake of natural disasters, the Better Business Bureau (BBB) sees a significant increase in the number of inquiries on general contractors in the area, often doubling what is typical. Unfortunately, consumers may be so overwhelmed by the damage that they end up paying for something that makes the situation worse. "People need professionals to help with cleanups and repairs," says Tom Bartholomy, President of Better Business Bureau in Charlotte, "but it is so important before you write that check." Although not all storm chasers are scammers, they may lack the proper licensing for your area, offer quick fixes, or make big promises they can't deliver.

BBB has these specific tips for victims of natural disasters:

- Do your research. Find businesses you can trust at [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org). BBB has business profiles on over 500 contractors in the area and you can read reviews or customer complaints. Check with the NC Licensing Board and get references from friends and relatives. Often times, a simple Google search of the contractor's name will quickly reveal a bad reputation if there is one. And make sure that whoever you hire is properly licensed to do the kind of work you need them to do.

- Contact your insurance company. Ask about your policy coverage and specific filing requirements. Your insurance company may also have recommended contractors, but beware of any contractor that comes to you and claims to have been sent by your insurance company.

- Resist high-pressure sales. Some storm chasers use tactics such as the "good deal" you'll get only if you hire the contractor on the spot. Be proactive in selecting a contractor and not reactive to sales calls on the phone or door-to-door pitches. Consumers should never feel forced to make a hasty decision.

- Be especially careful of door-to-door contractors. Many municipalities require a solicitation permit if sales people go door-to-door. Ask for identification. Check their vehicle for a business name, phone number, and local license plates.

### Wed. Storytime

The Anson County Partnership for Children offers Storytime in the Early Childhood Resource Center each Wednesday, from 10 to 10:30 a.m. for children ages 3 to 8. For more information call 704-694-4036.

Consumers can report suspected scams to BBB Scam Tracker or the office of the Attorney General in their state.

For tips on avoiding questionable appeals, as well as a list of national BBB Accredited Charities gearing up for hurricane relief efforts, go to [Give.org](http://Give.org).

The emergency phase of a disaster is just the beginning. Full recovery from a disaster will be a long-term activity that can take many months or years to accomplish, depending on the extent of the damage. Those truly concerned about helping communities bounce back will have many opportunities to help in the future. Follow the link above for a list of BBB Accredited Charities raising funds for Hurricane Florence relief assistance. This list will be updated as additional relief efforts come to BBB WGA's attention.



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