

## Beware of Charity Scams

Written by Arizona Foothills Magazine

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On March 11, one of the largest earthquakes in recorded history—at 9.0 magnitude—hit Japan, setting off powerful tsunamis and resulting in a reported 10,000 casualties. Good-hearted people near and far immediately wanted to help; however, some are falling victim to scams posed by fraudulent charities claiming to help Japan and others in wake of the natural disaster. “Unfortunately, with every crisis there seems to be those among us who invent despicable schemes designed to take advantage of our compassion,” says Arizona Secretary of State Ken Bennett in a press release. “During this time, we must remain especially vigilant for these scams to ensure that our hard-earned money gets to the people who desperately need it.”



In order to make sure that charitable citizens are donating to reputable organizations and services, Bennett recommends the following steps:

- Search for charities registered with the state of Arizona: [http://www.azsos.gov/business\\_services/Charities](http://www.azsos.gov/business_services/Charities). “One place they can start their homework is on our Web site. While the information isn’t a guarantee that the organization is genuinely advancing their stated cause, it is a great place to begin their research on how their donation will be used and verify the charity’s authenticity.”
- Visit [www.charitynavigator.org](http://www.charitynavigator.org) and [www.give.org](http://www.give.org) for comprehensive reports on charities and read recommendations of groups with proven track records.