



Crime Watch

'Tis The Season To Be Careful

(NAPSA)—While charity is said to begin at home, protecting against charity fraud should begin there as well.

Although appeals for charitable contributions appear in the mail, over the phone and on the Internet



If you are unfamiliar with a charity asking for donations, get more information.

throughout the year, they tend to increase during the holidays.

To guard against charity fraud, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service offers these suggestions.

- If you are unfamiliar with the charity asking for donations, request its annual report and financial statement.

- Check out unfamiliar organizations by contacting the Better Business Bureau.

- Make checks payable to an organization, not an individual.

- Be suspicious about requests for assistance that accept cash donations only.

Individuals who wish to do a background check of a charitable organization may also contact the Wise Giving Alliance, Council of Better Business Bureaus, 4200 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA 22203, or visit the Web site at www.give.org.

To learn more, or to report fraud online, visit the Postal Inspection Service Web site at www.usps.com/postalinspectors.