

# Police and Firefighter Solicitations

(Courtesy of the Better Business Bureau)

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Consumers and businesses have reported being solicited by companies that claim to provide crime prevention, safety, and police news.

These types of solicitations are often tied into purchasing advertising in a publication that often has limited distribution, and no official affiliation with local police or RCMP.

Most public safety organizations are not charitable. Most of them are for-profit publications, trade organizations, labor unions or lobbying groups. Even if they tell you about charitable causes they support, your donation may not be used for any charitable activities. In addition, most public safety group contributions are likely not tax deductible.

## **Better Business Bureau advises the public to do the following when solicited for a contribution.**

1. Ask how many police or fire fighters the organization supports and which communities it represents.
2. Find out how your money will be used. If it's for charitable purposes, ask how much goes to charity. Some organizations raise money to support the activities of unions and fraternal organizations. Contributions to a group that says it is tax-exempt are not necessarily tax deductible.
3. Fundraising is often connected to an event, such as a circus, or carnival or old-timers' hockey game, etc. Solicitors may suggest that you cover the cost of tickets for poor and/or handicapped individuals. Ask how many children will benefit, how they have been chosen, how the tickets will be distributed and whether transportation to the event has been arranged. Ask what happens to your money if the people for whom you have purchased tickets do NOT attend.
4. If you decide to donate, never give cash; write a cheque to the name of the organization, not to the person collecting the money.
5. If solicited by phone, don't allow an organization to send a runner to pick up your cheque; mail it.
6. If you are paying for advertising in a publication get all the details of your advertising in a contract, plus, ask to see a proof of the ad first and get a copy of the contract before submitting any payment.
7. Don't believe any insinuations that giving or not giving a donation will affect the protection that you receive from police or fire-fighters.

8. Note, that you cannot legally be billed for pledges or advertising you did not confirm either verbally or in writing. Inform the company by registered mail that you did not agree to the donation or ad purchase.

9. If the company says they are calling on behalf of police or impersonating a police officer, report the organization to your local police non-emergency line and the Competition Bureau, which may be able to review misleading advertising claims: [www.competitionbureau.gc.ca](http://www.competitionbureau.gc.ca)

10. Recognize these types of solicitations are designed to play on your emotions as they may be connected with issues you feel strongly about, like crime, missing children and personal safety. Inform yourself about the publication and check on any affiliations the company appears to make.

For further information please visit the Better Business Bureau:

<http://www.bbb.org>

or, visit the Ontario Ministry of Government and Consumer Services:

<https://www.sse.gov.on.ca/mcs/en/Pages/default.aspx>

Also see Phony Invoice Scams:

[https://www.sse.gov.on.ca/mcs/Documents/brochures/10\\_MCS\\_phoney\\_invoice.pdf](https://www.sse.gov.on.ca/mcs/Documents/brochures/10_MCS_phoney_invoice.pdf)