

**The public should stay alert and follow the tips below to continue to Give Safely:**

1. Before giving, check the Scottish Charity Register at [www.oscr.org.uk](http://www.oscr.org.uk) to see if the organisation is a charity. A charity's Register entry will also show whether it is up to date with its annual reporting requirements. Some 418,370 searches of the Scottish Charity Register were made between 1 January and 31 December 2012.
2. When approached by collectors, check whether they are wearing a proper ID badge, and that any collection tin is sealed. Be wary of ID that looks photocopied or home made. Check that collecting tins and buckets bear the name of the charity and are sealed and undamaged – it's illegal to collect in ordinary containers.
3. If in doubt, ask the collector for more information - a genuine fundraiser should be happy to answer questions and explain more about the work of the charity.
4. Genuine fundraising materials should feature the charity's name, registered name and a landline contact number. Be wary of those that list only a mobile number.
5. To check whether a fundraiser is authorised to collect money in a public place, contact your local authority. If it is a private place, check with the owner. A few Scottish charities are exempt from licensing – check with the Regulator.
6. Take care when responding to emails or clicking direct links to a website to check they are genuine. Instead, search online for your favourite charity to check that you have the right web address.
7. Carefully review collection bags for clothing and household goods to check whether they are from a genuine charity.
8. After making these checks, if you think that a collection or appeal is not legitimate, report it to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or to Police Scotland on 101. The Scottish Charity Regulator has powers to act where an organisation claims to be a charity when it is not entered in the Scottish Charity Register.
9. If in any doubt, contact your favoured charity direct to make a donation.