

### Quick Tips: Charitable Clothing Donations

We've all been here: You scour through your closet only to realize a large number of your clothes are either dated or don't fit. Weeding through, you end up with a pile full of shirts, sweaters and lightly used jeans you'd rather not throw in the garbage. So, you decide to throw them in a bag and drop them off in a clothing donation bin, feeling good about yourself that you've donated them to charity.

Shockingly, more often than not, rather than helping a charity and clothing the poor, your clothes have just helped fuel a business that is making someone rich. The good news is, with a little homework, you can donate your clothes where they can do the most good.

#### **"100% charity" could mean 100% scam.**

Beware of claims that state "all proceeds go to charity". Sometimes this means after expenses are covered, or it may be just a lie. Often, claims stating "100% Charity", "Proceeds to Charity" or "Charity Donation Bin" are posted on boxes, misleading donors to believe the bins are owned by charities and are helping the poor, but really they are for-profit businesses. On the flip side, some charities hire fundraising companies to collect donations for them, and some of your money may be going to pay them for their trouble. Some legitimate places also take your money to pay for administrative costs as well as helping the needy.

If there is a telephone number posted on the bin, call it. Request whether or not the proceeds go to charity, which charity they go to, how much is given to the charity and ask them for their charitable registration number.

#### **Ensure it's a legitimate charity.**

Many clothing bins claim their purpose is charitable. Some post a fake Charitable/BN Registration Number so they appear to donors as legitimate. You can validate the charity name and number given to you:

- i.) *Get the charity's registration number.* All charities operating in Canada are required by law to be registered with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and given a charitable registration number as a unique identity. This number is 9 digits in length, commonly followed by RR0001. Ex: 803407956RR0001
- ii.) *Verify the charity is real.* Check to see if the charity is registered in Canada by visiting the CRA Charities Directorate website by typing in its 9 digit number online <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/chrts-gvng/lstngs/menu-eng.html> or by calling the CRA Charities Directorate, 1-877-442-2899.

#### **Contact the charity.**

Call the charity listed on the clothing bin or visit its website. Learn more about the work they do and browse through their annual reports. Often, charities will provide information to you on whether or not they collect or accept clothing, and what items are needed by the charity and its recipients, as well as the preferred location these items can be dropped off. Find local charities and contact them to better understand their needs. They may desperately need the items you are discarding, and often do not have an outdoor donation bin to collect these items. You can be directed to charities in your community who wish to accept clothing donations by contacting your local telephone service directory such as 2-1-1.

If you have questions about donating to a charity, or require further information and assistance please contact Bri Trypuc, Donor Services - Charity Intelligence Canada: (e) [info@charityintelligence.ca](mailto:info@charityintelligence.ca) (t) 416.363.1555 (w) [www.charityintelligence.ca](http://www.charityintelligence.ca)