

# FRAUD ALERT!

## “Cleaning Out Your Closet”

Winter is upon us which means that Spring is just around the corner! Spring is a great time to clean out all those clothes that you no longer wear or need. Donating your used clothing is a nice gesture and very helpful to those in need. Donating instead of disposing of clothing also has a positive impact on the environment by keeping an estimated twelve tons of textiles from reaching our landfills in the United States.

But with so many charities accepting clothing donations, how do you choose where to take yours?

For convenience sake, many people prefer to drop their donations off at one of the donation drop boxes you see pop up all over your town. Have you ever wondered where those clothes actually go and to whom?

If it is important to you that your clothing donations go to a worthy cause and directly to those people who are struggling and you like the convenience of a drop box, there are a few things to look out for.

While it can be misleading, take a moment to read the information posted on the drop box. You should see the name of the charity, which you can then look up online to get more information such as: Is this charity a non-profit? Will the clothing be given directly to those in need?

It may surprise you to learn that many of the bins out there are NOT run by charities but indeed are run by a for-profit organization.

Unlike the traditional charities such as Goodwill, The Salvation Army and the Vincent de Paul Society, many clothing donation bins are owned by businesses, which resell the used clothing, usually to overseas markets, then pocket the profit.

If you want to be certain that your used clothing goes towards a good cause, seek out local churches, homeless shelters, second hand stores and violence and domestic abuse centers. Use only those drop boxes that you have gathered information on or those that you know to be a reputable charity.

The following are online resources for information on charities:

<https://www.charitynavigator.org/>

<https://www.charitywatch.org/charities>

<http://www.give.org/>

**Monthly Fraud Alerts brought to you by:**

**[Bucks County Crimes Against Older Adults Task Force](http://www.crimesagainstolderadultsbucks.org)**

**Bucks County District Attorney's Office**  
215-348-6344  
**Bucks County Area Agency on Aging**  
215-348-0510  
**Bucks County Coroner's Office**  
215-348-3852  
**Network of Victim Assistance (NOVA)**  
1-800-675-6900  
**[www.crimesagainstolderadultsbucks.org](http://www.crimesagainstolderadultsbucks.org)**

**A Woman's Place (AWP)**  
1-800-220-8116  
**Bucks County Office of Consumer Protection**  
215-348-6060  
**Bucks County Register of Wills**  
215-348-6265  
**US Dept. of Health and Human Services/OIG**  
1-800-447-8477  
**24 - HOUR HOTLINE: 1-800-490-8505**