

GARAGE SALES

Donating Items to Charity

When you're setting up a garage sale, one of the things you need to consider is what you're going to do with what doesn't sell. You may think of donating them for charity, and that's a great idea. Here are some tips for donating items from Charity Navigator.

SEE IF IT'S USEFUL

Charities can only use items that are new, unused or very nearly new. Look at the items you may wish to donate and make sure that you'd want to still use them. Consider if they're ripped, stained or too worn. Are they rusty or broken? Do they have all the pieces? If you answered yes to the first question and no to the last two, you may want to think about throwing it away rather than including it in your sale. Those things probably won't sell very well, either.

ITEMS CHARITIES WON'T ACCEPT

There are things that you may not be able to donate to



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charity. Goodwill, for example, may not accept some things such as some types of furniture — especially upholstered furniture, some types of exercise equipment, CRT televisions or computer monitors, any household chemicals or cleaners, some large appliances, personal care items, fragrance items, carpet or carpet padding, plumbing

or building materials, some types of recyclables, weapons and some baby goods that do not meet the current safety standards. Check with your charity of choice before you plan on them taking your garage sale leftovers.

CONSIDER ADDING A CHARITY TO YOUR SALE

One way to help a charity

and your garage sale is by adding a charity to your sale. Donating cash instead of items gives charities greater flexibility in spending the money so that it reaches those that need it most, Charity Navigator says. By selling things yourself, you cut out the overhead of a charity shop, netting more money for the charity itself.

Adding a charity to your sale might also bring you sales when people who wouldn't have come to your sale alone decide to come out and support the charity. The charity may help you advertise or even help you staff your sale. They may also ask you to join with others in a larger sale, which could help you make more sales.

By selling the items yourself and donating the cash, you also take the guesswork out of writing off your donations on your taxes. You can give an exact amount instead of having to estimate the value of noncash items.

CHOOSE A LOCAL CHARITY

By choosing a local charity to support with either your items or your cash, you're keeping more of your donation in your community. The farther the charity has to travel to pick up items, the less of an impact noncash donations have. You can also use charity databases like Charity Navigator to find and evaluate local charities and causes for donations.

Noncash items aren't always resold, either. The charity may choose to use some of the items themselves. A shelter, for instance, may use a sofa in their lounge or bedsheets for dressing beds for people in need.

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BUYER'S TIP

Don't Haggle at Charity Sales

When you're shopping a sale that supports charity, don't haggle and treat the prices as firm. Remember that you're raising money for a good cause, not just looking for a great deal.

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