

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM LOTTERY SCAMS

By CBSI Media

Lottery scams follow a definite pattern. In almost every case, you'll be contacted with the news that you've won a lottery prize. What happens next, though is what separates a scam from a legitimate offer; you'll be asked to send in money before your prize can be released to you.

What are some of the lottery scam warning signs:

1. *Receiving a message stating you won a lottery prize, but you've never purchased a ticket for that lottery or even participated in the first place.*

Its impossible to win a lottery you haven't entered. (But if you have purchased a ticket on the lottery that you've told you've won, be certain that sign number 2 below, isn't present.)

2. *You're required to pay a fee before your winning can be released to you. You may be told this fee is to cover taxes, administration or legal costs. Often, you'll be instructed to forward this money by wire transfer.*

A legitimate lottery operator will never require you to pay money to them (other than what you pay to purchase a ticket) as a condition of collecting a prize. Scammers will usually ask you to forward money by wire transfer.

3. *You received a message informing you that you've won, accompanied by what appears to be a valid cheque. You're told that it's a partial payment of your winnings... but you must cash the cheque and return the amount to the sender (to cover "fees" like those mentioned in sign number 2) before they can release the rest of your prize money.*

The cheque you received is a counterfeit. Unfortunately, it could take your bank up to six weeks to discover this. By that time, you'll already have the money on to the scammers... and you'll be liable to your bank for the full amount.

4. *You're required to "prove your identity" by forwarding copies of personal documents like your passport, drivers license, and/or your bank account information.*

Identity and banking information is like gold to scammers. They can use it to access your bank account or steal your identity. Remember if you haven't actually entered the lottery that they claim you've won, you can't win a prize and therefore you should not provide any personal information.

5. *You're told that you don't claim your prize by a specific date – usually within a few weeks or only just days – you'll forfeit it.*

Scammers use tight deadlines, to pressure you into acting quickly

6. *You're asked to keep your win confidential until after you received your prize.*

Asking you to stay quiet is a tactic scammers use to protect themselves until they've got your money from you. Legitimate lottery operators do not require winners to stay silent until their prize has been awarded.

Remember, if you've truly won a prize, you should not be required to pay out money to receive it.

End//

For more information, contact the Central Bank of Solomon Islands at info@cbsi.com.sb or 21791.