

Winner or Loser?

You just received a phone call from a very friendly voice letting you know that you have won two million dollars and not just one, but TWO brand new Mercedes Benz sports cars! Now all they need you to do is wire or send money orders to them for \$500 so they can get your account and routing number to be able to send you your two million dollars. They may actually need you to go ahead and send a couple thousand more to pay for the tag, title, and taxes for your brand new Mercedes Benz sports cars too. You didn't even have to sign up for this--by good fortune, you just won! Sounds pretty great right? WRONG!! Unfortunately instead of getting your two million dollars and fancy sports cars, you lose the money that you sent to them. Scammers can be very friendly and convincing, and will try to talk you into sending more and more money to them, all while still promising you your winnings. Lottery and Sweepstakes scams are some of the most common types of scams out there today. According to the FTC, these types of scams were the third-most common type of fraud reported in 2017. These types of scammers also try to reach out to victims via text messages, emails, mailers, and social media sites.

Now let's talk about Publishers Clearing House showing up at a household, large cardboard check in tote, balloons, and happy people that just won a million dollars. We have all seen it on TV several times, and who wouldn't want that good fortune? Many scammers like to use the Publishers Clearing House as a front to scam you out of money. It is important to remember that Publishers Clearing House will never call you ahead of time to tell you of your winnings, or request that you send money to collect your prize. If someone calls you claiming to be publishers clearing house, and wants you to send money to collect your prize, hang up immediately and report it to the Federal Trade Commission.

To the right of the page, we have listed the FTC's top tips to avoid lottery and sweepstakes scams, and a telephone number and website to report scams. If you have given your account information out or feel you have been a victim to a scam, reach out to your local branch as soon as possible, so that we may take action to help minimize your financial loss.

The Federal Trade Commissions Top Tips to Avoid Lottery & Sweepstakes Scams:

1. Keep your money – and your information – to yourself. Never share your financial information with someone who contacts you and claims to need it. Never wire money to or share gift card numbers with anyone who asks you to. Both payment methods are a sure sign of a scam.
2. Pass this information on to a friend. You probably throw away these kinds of bogus offers or hang up when you get these calls, but you probably know someone who could use a friendly reminder.
3. If you spot a scam, report it to the FTC at ftc.gov/complaint. Your report can help FTC investigators identify the scammers and stop them before they steal someone's hard-earned money.

Please Report Scams:

**1-877-FTC-HELP
(1-877-382-4357)**

www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov

Sources/Resources:

<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2018/06/winners-are-losers-lottery-sweepstakes-scams>
<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2017/07/fake-publishers-clearing-house-scams>



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