Sweepstakes

"Congratulations, You have won $100,000! You are hereby notified that you are a winner..."

We all dream about winning big and how we would spend the winnings. Sweepstakes scams thrive because they make you believe your dreams might have come true.

Remember these tips:

- **Don’t be fooled by official-looking mail.** It’s not legitimate just because the envelope is marked “urgent” and the contents look impressive.

- **Don’t give out personal information.** No legitimate company will ever need your Social Security, bank account or credit card numbers to declare you a winner.

- **Don’t pay to win.** Buying goods or services won’t increase your chances of winning, and you cannot be required to buy something before you collect a prize.

- **Don’t send money for taxes.** If you win a prize, you will never pay taxes directly to the sweepstakes company. Only the government collects taxes.

Remember, prizes are always free.

Foreign Lotteries

These are always scams. Scam operators use the telephone, mail and e-mail to entice U.S. consumers to buy chances at high-stakes foreign lotteries in countries around the world.

Remember:

- You cannot win a lottery when you have not bought a ticket.
- It is illegal to play a lottery in another country from the United States.
- Legitimate lotteries only sell their lottery products within their own areas—Montana businesses can only sell Montana lottery tickets.

Legitimate Lotteries

A legitimate lottery will:

- never send money orders or cashier’s checks and ask the winner to wire some of the money back
- never require:
  - shipping and handling fees
  - up-front, cash payment of taxes
  - a “good faith” showing—they won’t ask you to send money up front to confirm your identity

To find out if you have won a lottery in Montana, check at no cost at any business that sells lottery tickets. If you are a victim of a sweepstakes or lottery scam, contact:

Office of Consumer Protection (Contact below)

Montana Lottery
(406) 444-5825 | www.montanalottery.com