



CONSUMER ALERT

Consumer Alert: Attorney General Warns Marylanders About Scam “Winning Lottery” Letter

BALTIMORE, MD (November 18, 2019) – Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh’s Consumer Protection Division is warning consumers of a “lottery” mail scam targeting Marylanders. The scam letter claims the recipient has won the “Mega Millions International Lottery 2019 Draw” and includes a counterfeit reproduction of the Maryland Mega Millions logo. The sender of the letter has **no affiliation** with the Mega Millions Consortium, which is the group of United States Lotteries organized to jointly create and operate the multi-state lottery game known as Mega Millions.

The letter reported to the Attorney General’s office is purported to be from the “International Promotion Prize Award Dept.,” includes several logos including that of Mega Millions and the United Nations, asks the recipient to call a foreign number or send an email to claim their lottery “winnings,” establishes a deadline for the recipient to contact the lottery company, claims that the lottery company will need to be paid a percentage of the “winnings,” and that the lottery company can pay the recipient by wire transfer to their bank account.

Here are some tips to avoid being scammed by “lottery” letters, email, or texts:

- Do not under any circumstances send money by wire, funds transfer, gift cards, or cashier’s check to anyone claiming you need to pay a fee to receive an award or lottery winnings, particularly one you didn’t specifically enter.
- Do not give your bank routing or account information to anyone so they can “deposit your winnings.” The money in your bank account could be wiped out in seconds.
- Be wary of urgent requests to “act now”; scammers will often create a false sense of urgency to get you to respond without thinking carefully.
- Do not click on any links or call any numbers in a suspicious email or text; even if the links look official, they could redirect you to a harmful website or download viruses onto your phone or computer.
- If it looks too good to be true, like winning millions of dollars from a foreign lottery, it probably is.

If you receive a letter like the one described above, or any letter claiming you have won an “international” lottery, **throw it away!** Unless you specifically entered a Maryland Lottery promotion, you will never be contacted by Lottery officials informing you that you have won a prize. Under Maryland law, it is unlawful for a person, another state, or foreign government to

sell a lottery ticket in the State of Maryland. You may visit <https://www.mdlottery.com/about-us/fraud-prevention/> for more information about fraud prevention.

If you receive any materials at your home address regarding another state's lottery or a foreign government's lottery, please forward that information directly to the U.S. Postal Inspection Service Mail Fraud division through <https://www.uspis.gov/report/>, or you may call 1-800-372-8347. You can also report receiving these letters to the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division (www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov) and Federal Trade Commission (<https://www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov/>).