



NEWS FROM SCDCA

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS
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1.800.922.1594 (toll free in SC)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Scam Alert: Fake Sweepstakes on Social Media

Columbia, SC... The South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs (SCDCA) is warning consumers that fraudsters are turning to social media sites to revive an age-old scam.

Consumers may receive a message on Facebook from people claiming to be representatives of popular sweepstakes companies. The messages typically say “*You’re a Winner*” or “*Exciting News*” in the subject line. Once the consumer opens the message, it reads they have won a large sum of money, but there is a catch. In order to receive the prize they must either submit sensitive financial information or wire cash to pay fees.

Facebook is not the only social media site used for this ruse. Similar scams are circulating via Instagram and Twitter, too. Consumers are encouraged to consider the following tips before daydreaming about how to spend the winnings:

- Be suspicious. A sure sign of a scam is if a consumer is asked to pay a fee in order to receive an unclaimed prize. Money being requested via prepaid debit card or wire transfer? Red flag: these payment methods are virtually untraceable.
- Never give out financial information in order to receive a prize.
- Legitimate sweepstake organizations do not send private messages via social media sites.
- A consumer cannot win a contest they didn’t enter. Beware of claims such as, “You were automatically entered because you shopped at *enter big box store name*.”

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- Report spam and phishing messages to social media site managers and the Department of Consumer Affairs by calling 800-922-1594.

For more information on sweepstakes scams, see SCDCA's Spotlight on Telephone Scams, http://www.consumer.sc.gov/Documents/SpotLight/Telephone_Scams.pdf.

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SCDCA aims to protect consumers from inequities in the marketplace through advocacy, complaint mediation, enforcement and education. To file a complaint or get information on consumer issues, visit www.consumer.sc.gov or call toll-free, 1.800.922.1594.

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