

From: Attorney General
Sent: Friday, June 18, 2010 12:02 PM
To:
Subject: Scam Alert: Beware Bogus Sweepstakes Letters



ATTORNEY GENERAL'S

SCAM ALERT

A Consumer Protection Alert from Oregon Attorney General John Kroger

Consumer Protection Hotline: 1-877-877-9392

Online: www.oregonattorneygeneral.gov

NEW! Look up consumer complaints about businesses online: www.oregonattorneygeneral.gov/beinformed

Dear ,

Thank you again for joining the [Oregon Scam Alert Network](#). Please feel free to forward this email and encourage your family members, friends and colleagues to join the network too. Together we can fight fraud and help protect Oregonians from falling prey to predatory schemes.

Also, you can now look up the complaints we receive about businesses! Please check out our new consumer resource: [Be InfORmed](#).

"BEWARE BOGUS SWEEPSTAKES LETTERS"

Attorney General John Kroger is warning Oregonians not to respond to an unsolicited "sweepstakes" letter claiming that the recipient has "won" money and only needs to pay a small fee to obtain it. The Department of Justice Consumer Hotline has received calls inquiring about a letter from the "Data Release Division" based in Jericho, New York. The letter claims to be a "guaranteed sweepstakes award," notifying the recipient they have won \$1.4 million. In reality, this letter is a deceptive solicitation than seeks money from unsuspecting Oregon consumers.

The Department of Justice has sent a letter to the "Data Release Division" ordering the company to cease mailing this deceptive letter to Oregon consumers or face sanctions for violating Oregon's the Unlawful Trade Practices Act.

Bogus sweepstakes and lottery offers are among the most common scams that seek to rip off consumers. In 2009, more than 1,000 Oregon consumers reported losing in excess of \$700,000 to sweepstakes, lottery and other scams.

Attorney General Kroger offers the following advice regarding unsolicited telephone calls, mail or e-mail claiming that the recipient won a sweepstakes or lottery:

- Participating in a foreign lottery is illegal. Often these schemes are closely tied to organized crime.
- Never pay-to-play in a sweepstakes.
- Beware of fake organizations using similar names to more well-known groups in an attempt to trick consumers.
- Government agencies do not sponsor sweepstakes.
- Never wire money to receive a prize. Con artists frequently send victims fake checks as a "first down-payment" of their winnings, asking that a percentage be wired back under the misrepresentation that it will be used to "pay taxes" associated with the "winnings." These fake checks can sit in one's checking account for up to a week before ultimately bouncing.
- Beware of requests for income, credit card ownership, or bank accounts as a condition of participating in the sweepstakes or lottery.
- Do not participate in sweepstakes, or respond to advertisements, that resemble a check, bill, or invoice.

The Oregon Department of Justice Consumer Hotline, 1-877-877-9392, is a free resource for all Oregonians with consumer questions, concerns or complaints. If consumers receive fake sweepstakes or lottery offers please shred or delete the offer. If you or someone you know has fallen victim to a sweepstakes or lottery scam, please contact the Consumer Hotline for assistance.

Quick Links

[DOJ Web Site](#)

[Sign Up for the Scam Alert Network](#)

[Be InfORmed: Search Consumer Complaints Online](#)
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