

Consumer **WARNING**

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL LISA MADIGAN

"CANADIAN LOTTERY" PROMISES JACKPOT OF TROUBLE

Some Illinoisans have received mail or phone calls telling them they have won the "Canadian Lottery"—or some other international lottery—with just one hitch: They must send money to cover the "non-resident tax" before they can collect their winnings.

This is a scam. You cannot win a lottery for which you have not bought a ticket, and you cannot win a sweepstakes you have not entered. The Canadian Lottery does not exist. Although some Canadian provinces conduct legitimate lotteries, you must purchase a ticket to win. In addition, playing an international lottery by mail or phone is against the law.

International lottery scams gain access to consumers' wallets in several ways. Con artists sometimes ask consumers to send money directly to collect their "winnings." Or they might ask consumers to provide bank account numbers so their "winnings" can be transferred into their account. The con artists then empty the bank account. In one especially cruel scheme, con artists target victims of a previous lottery scam and inform that, for a fee, their lost money can be recovered.

The bottom line is to avoid any and all contact with international lotteries. Any money you send will most likely be lost forever, and any account information you reveal will make you vulnerable to identity theft.



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