

Lucky winner or gullible victim?

Ever opened your mail and found you've unexpectedly won a competition, lottery or other exciting prize? In some cases this mail may be genuine, but often it is a scam to get you to part with your money.

Letters from scam operators are often personally addressed to you or your business. Most scams originate and operate from outside South Australia, and the majority are from overseas.

Ways to spot a scam

Deceptive promotional material

- documents may look "official" or genuine (eg company letterheads, certificates, logos)
- it states the scheme is legal - this usually means it is not
- it has been checked and approved by some bogus or unnamed Government Authority
- you must respond or buy quickly otherwise the 'opportunity will be lost'

Have you heard these "too good to be true" claims before?

- you have "won" a lottery or competition that you have never entered
- this is a 'big money earner' with 'no risk'
- mystical or religious groups will solve your money or health problems if you send a donation
- an unknown "millionaire" wishes to share their secrets of success with you
- earn big dollars through commissions by introducing others into a scheme

It is easy for scam operators to take your money and run if you simply send them cash or a cheque or if you hand over your financial details (eg. bank account)

Do not hand over your money or financial/personal details if:

- you have to send money before you can receive your prize, or
- you must reply to a post office box number or to an international address, or
- an overseas organisation needs to deposit money into your bank account so that another important business transaction can take place.

How scams operate

Scam operators:

- conceal their identity by creating false business and personal names, use post box numbers or temporary addresses
- often operate outside their own state or country to reduce the risk of being caught
- appeal to people's needs and the desire to be wealthy, healthy, attractive or safe
- hope that a small percentage of people from a large mail distribution list will take the bait and send money
- compile a "sucker list" of those who have responded to bogus offers and then sell the list to other scam operators
- regularly change the name of the scheme and vary the claims made.

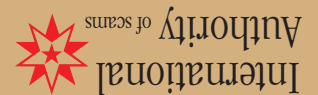
Some sensible advice

- be wary about giving details of your credit card, bank account or personal information (eg. passport or driver's licence)
- be wary about sending money to a post office box number or to an overseas address
- if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is
- do business with companies you know and trust
- report any suspected scams to Consumer Affairs



B Scam Smart
13 Beat the Cheats Ave
Smartville 3390

FINAL ATTEMPT TO NOTIFY



What should you do if you think it's a scam?

Be scam smart

Contact Consumer Affairs before responding to any offer.

This may help prevent you and others from being ripped off by scam operators.

Ph: 8204 9777

Country callers: 131 882

www.ocba.sa.gov.au



Government
of South Australia

Typical scams

Nigerian Letter

A Nigerian business or government official will spin a yarn saying that they need to transfer funds from Nigeria to Australia. They request your help, and so if you allow them to transfer the funds into your account you will be rewarded with a share of the million dollar bonanza. Never send money to cover the costs for the processing fee as you may never see your money again. Do not send your bank account

details either as you will find your account totally cleaned out within days. Similar letters are sent about funds in other African nations.

Overseas lotteries

Whatever claims the promoter may make about the lottery, overseas lotteries are illegal in Australia. They claim that the chances of winning are greater with overseas lotteries, but they take your money without even buying tickets for the lottery.

Unexpected windfall

You receive a letter telling you that you've won a prize which can only be claimed if you pay a "processing fee". You should not have to pay for something that you have won, otherwise you are either buying the product (usually a cheap imitation of what is offered) or the scam operator simply takes your money and you never hear from them again.