

# Financial Crimes Task Force of Southwestern Pennsylvania

# CONSUMER ALERT

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## **INTERNATIONAL LOTTERY SCAMS**

Despite the fact that playing an international lottery is a violation of federal law, international lotteries still manage to generate hundreds of millions of dollars a year from consumers who believe that they can strike it rich purchasing and partaking in foreign lotteries.

Using the mail and the telephone, scam operators will attempt to entice you to purchase lottery tickets. In most cases, these tickets are never purchased. When they are purchased, the operators usually keep any winnings that are generated or fraudulently access your bank accounts to withdrawal funds from you.

Recently, consumers have begun receiving emails similiar to those being circulated by Nigerian scam operators. These emails notify you of a large sum of money that you have won as part of an international lottery prize. To claim your winnings, you must contact a claims agent and provide him or her with bank account information where your winnings will be transferred. Once the operators of this scam have your bank account information, they immediately drain your bank account of all available funds.

In the excitement to believe that they have won millions, victims often overlook aspects of the email that are false. In one email, the recipient was asked to *"keep this award a top secret from the public notice until your claim has been processed and your prize money remitted to your account as this is part of our Security protocol."* Another email claimed that the recipient had won because her email address was attached to the winning lucky number.

Remember these two age old sayings when dealing with emails which purport to pay you millions of dollars...

**You can't win if you don't play  
&  
There's no such thing as free money**

Click [HERE](#) for a complete list of scams and other fraudulent activity.



The Financial Crimes Task Force of Southwestern Pennsylvania is a cooperative effort of federal, state, county and local law enforcement agencies working together to address the growing problem of financial crimes. The task force is run under the direction of the United States Postal Inspection Service.