



For Immediate Release
October 24, 2008

District Attorney Nola Foulston warns of a scam involving telephone calls to consumers regarding prize winnings. These calls are allegedly from UPS and the IRS. During the initial call, the caller represents they are with UPS and need to verify a time the consumer will be home to receive delivery of a sweepstakes or prize check. The caller also tells the consumer they will be receiving a subsequent call from the IRS regarding tax information on the winnings. A short time later the consumer receives a second call, allegedly from the IRS. During the subsequent call, consumers are told they must pay taxes on the winnings prior to the check being delivered and callers ask consumers for bank account information. In one instance a consumer did not have a bank account, and the caller requested she send the funds via Western Union.

THE PHONE CALLS ARE A SCAM.

Contrary to the phone call, you've not won a prize or sweepstakes. In the event you receive such a telephone call, do not provide the information. It is all a scam to get your personal information so the caller can obtain monies from your account without your permission. Never give out personal information over the phone to anyone unless you initiate the contact.

As a consumer, our office suggests that you remember the following when you receive this or other similar type solicitations:

1. If the sender requests personal information such as bank accounts or social security numbers or insists that you wire back funds, end the transaction immediately.
2. If the sender (whether by letter, e-mail or telephone) requests any sort of payment for fees or taxes in advance, it is a scam. The consumer is responsible for reporting cash prizes to the IRS and paying the taxes.
3. Never give out your credit card and bank account information unless you initiated the contact.

In the event you provided sensitive information before you realized the telephone call or an e-mail was phony, we suggest you take the following steps:

1. Contact YOUR bank, alert them as to what occurred and request help on securing your accounts/money;
2. Contact the three main Credit Bureaus and place fraud alerts on you account(s) to safeguard against any potential fraudulent credit activity;
3. Report the incident to the local law enforcement agency and obtain the incident number assigned to your call;
4. Maintain a file of all future incidents regarding your personal information that may arise from this incident. Keep records of all names, addresses, and phone numbers of the people you speak to. Additionally, keep records of the times you spoke with them and a summation of the conversation(s). All this information may be important if action is required by you later.

For additional information on protecting yourself from these crimes, contact the Consumer Fraud and Economic Crimes Division of the District Attorney's Office at 660-3600 or go to the District Attorney's website at <http://sedgwickcounty.org/da> for helpful links.

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