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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

VIDEO CONSUMER ALERT: Attorney General Moody Warns Floridians About Sweepstakes Scams on National Lottery Day



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—On National Lottery Day, Attorney General Ashley Moody is warning Floridians of scams involving lotteries, prizes and sweepstakes. According to the Federal Trade Commission, scams involving prizes, sweepstakes and lotteries caused nearly $340 million in financial losses to consumers last year and were the third-most commonly reported scam across the nation. Attorney General Moody is issuing tips for Floridians to avoid being swindled.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “Today is National Lottery Day, and we are warning Floridians about scammers that target victims with the promise of a big prize. They will request payment or personal information in order to receive the winnings. Don’t fall for their tricks. Check out our Consumer Alert for more information to help spot and avoid sweepstakes scams.”

In a lottery or sweepstakes scam, fraudsters will call, email, text or send a letter claiming the target won a prize or large sum of money. However, in order to receive it, the fraudsters will demand that the victim pay multiple fees or give personal or account information.

The Florida Lottery will never request a fee payment. The only deductions from winnings will be in the form of taxes. Winnings will also never be transferred over the phone or through a wire transfer. In fact, if a participant wins more than $600 through the Florida Lottery, the participant must physically report to one of the organization’s district offices to collect the winnings.

Scammers might also:

- Urge the target to act fast by setting up a Cash App, Venmo or PayPal account;
- In smaller cases, demand the target purchase gift cards to prove their debit card, credit card and banking account are active;
- Claim the money is easier to transfer via cryptocurrency and get the target to not only create a crypto account, but also provide a public key that will give the fraudster access to account information; or
- Create fake websites with names that resemble a legitimate lottery organization or gambling company.

Here are some tips to avoid sweepstakes and lottery scams:

- Exercise caution if receiving notice of winning money or a prize—especially if you never entered a lottery or sweepstakes;
- Never click on links or respond directly to a solicitation from an unknown source with personal information;
- Be sure to read the rules and regulations before entering a contest—always read the fine print; and
- Contact the lottery organization directly for more information after independently verifying the correct contact information.

To report a lottery or sweepstakes scam, contact the Florida Attorney General's Office at 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or file a complaint at MyFloridaLegal.com.

To report a fraudulent sweepstakes or lottery offer received by mail, contact the Postal Inspection Service online at USPIS.gov.

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