



## Sweepstakes Scams

There are several well-known and legitimate sweepstakes companies that offer unbelievable prizes to lucky winners. However, scammers often use their name and reputation to perpetrate scams, leading to financial loss and disappointment for unsuspecting victims. This week, we'll share some details on sweepstakes scams, explain how they work, and share crucial tips to help you recognize and avoid falling victim to them.

### How it Works:

Sweepstakes scams are fraudulent schemes where individuals or organizations deceive people into thinking they've won a substantial prize. Scammers often contact victims through phone calls, emails, or letters, claiming that they've won millions of dollars and only need to pay a fee or provide sensitive information to claim their prize. These scams exploit the genuine excitement surrounding legitimate giveaways and can be financially devastating for victims.

### How to Stay Safe:

- **Verify the Source:** If you receive a notice or other communication claiming you've won a sweepstakes, be cautious. Contact the sweepstakes organization directly using only official contact information. Never trust contact details provided in correspondence you might receive.
- **Be Cautious of Sharing:** Never disclose sensitive personal or financial information to unknown parties. This includes your Social Security number, bank account details, credit card information, or any other private data.
- **Beware of Payment Request:** Scammers often demand payments for taxes, delivery, customs fees, or even processing charges to release your alleged sweepstakes prize. Legitimate sweepstakes do not require upfront payments, so if you're asked to send money to claim the prize, it's probably a SCAM.
- **Trust Your Instincts:** If you have any doubts about the legitimacy of a prize notification, trust your instincts. Scammers can be convincing, but if something seems off, slow down and seek verification through official channels or ask someone you trust for help.
- **Avoid Unsolicited Contacts:** Be cautious when receiving unsolicited phone calls, emails, or letters claiming you've won a sweepstakes, especially if you haven't entered.
- **Stay Educated:** Make sure you stay informed about the latest scams and fraud techniques. Your bank's website and other trusted sources often provide information about current scam tactics. The more you know, the better prepared you are to recognize and avoid potential threats.