

Some Tips to Remember:

If it seems to good to be true,
it probably is!

If it comes from Canada, Europe, Africa,
Jamaica, or Asia, **it is a scam!**

If the email message or written notification has **poor English grammar, and the spelling is very bad** or if the pitch comes in the form of a telephone caller with a heavy foreign accent it is probably from a scammer.

If you didn't enter, how can you win? It's also illegal to enter out of country lotteries—you can be arrested!

Even if you are given a telephone number and address, the telephone is probably a throw away cell phone (untraceable) and the address is probably non-existent. Go to www.800notes.com then enter the phone number to see what others say about it. This is an excellent site to see if the number calling you is real or a fake/scam number.

Remember, these people always want you to **WIRE** them money, not mail a check!

Never provide any personal information, such as social security number, credit card or bank account information over the phone or internet to someone **who has contacted you**. Contact your bank, credit card company or other business and ask if they have requested this information over the internet or phone. **Remember, they already have the information—they don't need to ask for it again.**

These people are smooth! If you receive a phone call, they will try to be your best friend and pretend they are working in your best interest. If you decline their offer, they may turn pushy and nasty; **JUST HANG UP!**

If the pitch is by e-mail, **DELETE IT!**

To Report Fraud & Scams:

FBI/Internet Fraud Complaint Center:
1-800-251-3221 or www.ifccfbi.gov
Federal Trade Commission at
www.FTC.gov/ftc/consumer

To report fraud/scams originating from Canada, go to www.Phonebusters.com

For additional information on Scams and to read more about the various types of scams both old and new, go to
www.onguardonline.gov
www.atg.wa.gov
www.fakechecks.org (this is an awesome site)
www.aarp.org (search for "scams")

These sites have excellent information on all sorts of scams and are updated regularly.

If you haven't already done so, you may want to sign up for the **Do Not Call Registry 1-888-382-1222**. Once on this list, telemarketers are not supposed to call you; scammers will continue to contact you.

You can register via internet with the FTC, or phone 1-888-382-1222. This is a free service.

Unfortunately, these scams are rarely, if ever, solved as most of the scammers are out of the country. Do not feel bad about hanging up on someone who calls you wanting money or personal information.

IF YOU ARE ASKED TO WIRE MONEY IT IS A SCAM. IF YOU RECEIVE A CHECK FOR OVER THE AMOUNT, IT IS A SCAM. NEVER WIRE MONEY TO ANYONE YOU DON'T PERSONALLY KNOW FOR ANY REASON.

How Not to Become a Victim of **SCAMS**

**Scammers Pose as Friends, Family, Businesses, and Government Agencies
Don't Fall For It!**



WALLA WALLA POLICE
DEPARTMENT
54 E. Moore St.
WALLA WALLA, WA 99362
509-527-4434

**Crime Victims Service
Center for Walla Walla County
509-524-4526**



What is a Scam?

A scam is any means someone uses to get you to part with your money. A scam can occur over the telephone, through the mail, over the internet, or in person. Most scams originate from Canada, Europe, Asia, and Africa and are virtually impossible to solve or discover who the scammer is.

Popular Scams Hitting the Walla Walla Valley!

Lottery/Contest Scams:

It begins with an email, phone call or letter claiming you have won a lottery or contest. You are to contact a claims agent to get further instructions, usually at an e-mail address or telephone number. You contact the agent who either sends you a check which claims to be part of your winnings to cover "administrative fees and taxes" **or** asks you to use your own money to pay taxes and fees before you get the "lottery" money. If you send your own money, you will be on a "sucker list" and it will be never ending.

The check you receive is usually on a U.S. company, even though the scam comes from Australia or Canada. The check most often has no telephone number, either for the bank or the U.S. company it is drawn on (difficult to verify the check). You will be asked to deposit the check and **wire** a certain percentage, usually about 75%. The checks are counterfeit and have no value whatsoever. If you deposit the check and take cash back, your bank will hold you responsible

for paying back the money withdrawn. If you get any type of lottery notification, ignore it. Legitimate sweepstakes or lotteries (state lotteries) don't require you to pay "taxes" or fees in advance.

Remember: If you didn't enter the lottery or contest, how could you win?

"Phishing" Scams:

Internet or phone scammers cast about for your financial information, thus, it is called "phishing". In a phishing scam, an e-mail which appears to be from a legitimate company or bank informs the recipient their account may have become compromised or they have lost information. The recipient is directed to click on a link within the email. The victim is then forwarded to a Website that appears identical to the legitimate one. The fraudulent Website requires the victim to enter personal and account information in order to verify their account. The victim is told that if the information is not provided, the account will be suspended. Any information provided can then be used by criminals to make purchases or open new accounts in the victim's name. Some of the more popular businesses used are banks, e-Bay, PayPal, the IRS, among others. **Legitimate businesses never use the internet to obtain information in this manner. They don't have your e-mail address!**

Internet Auctions/Sales:

You've advertised an item on one of the many internet auction or sale sites. You get an e-mail from someone who claims to be overseas right now, either visiting or living there and they want to purchase your item. They tell you they have an agent in the U.S. who will pick up the item. Once a couple of e-

mails have gone back and forth, the buyer says that he owes some money to the agent or the agent requires money up front to ship or pick up the item. The buyer states that he will send you a check for \$3,000.00 to \$4,000.00 **over** the purchase price or 3 or 4 US Postal Money Orders and asks you to **wire** the excess amount to his agent. These checks are counterfeit at best. Once the "buyer" has your money, you will never hear from him again.

Do not ever deposit or cash a check for anything over the original amount—it is a scam.

Grandparent Scam:

You receive a call from your "grandchild" who claims to be injured or in jail in a foreign county. In order to get out of the hospital/jail, you must **wire** money to a friend or "attorney". The scammers are hoping that you will say something like "Is this John (or Mary)?" to which they reply "yes". The asking price is anywhere from \$1,500.00 to \$5,000.00. Call your relative or relative's parents/spouse to find out where you "grandchild" or other relative is. These calls usually come late at night, attempting to catch you off guard.

Rental Scam:

You find an ad on the internet that lists a very affordable home for rent in the area in which you are looking. The person claims to be out of the area, so asks that you **wire** a deposit in exchange for the keys. They have no right to rent the property—it is a scam. Always meet the individual or agent who is renting the property. **Never wire money for rent.**