

# Taxpayer Alert

## ALERT

### **You do not have to pay taxes or fees to the CRA on lottery or sweepstakes winnings!**

The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) is warning the public to beware of an email scam in which individuals are informed that they have won a large sum of money in a lottery or sweepstakes, usually from a foreign country.

There are many versions of the scam, but the general concept remains the same: The victim receives an unsolicited email or regular mail from a legitimate-sounding financial institution claiming it has a bank draft from a foreign sweepstakes company that is payable to him or her. The email states that, to receive the prize, the addressee must first pay part of the taxes allegedly owed on the prize amount.

No taxes or fees of any kind have to be paid on lottery winnings in Canada. Any unsolicited email, letter, or telephone call telling you otherwise is a scam. Do not, under any circumstances, send money to someone making such a pitch to you. Instead, immediately contact your local police department or the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

If you receive an email that claims to be from the CRA and asks for money, or if someone sends you a copy of an email that was supposedly sent to him or her by the CRA, you are likely dealing with a scam artist trying to rob you of your life savings.

### **Here are a few tips to avoid being a victim of such a scam:**

1. Does the letter or email contain several noticeable typos or spelling and grammatical errors? If it does, you're probably dealing with a scam. The CRA employs technology and people to ensure there are minimal errors in its communications with taxpayers.
2. Does the letterhead in the documents look out of focus or unclear? The CRA has very strict guidelines regarding the creation of letterhead and the use of its corporate identifiers. If you are unsure, compare with documents you received in previous dealings with the CRA. If you're still not sure, contact your tax services office.



3. Are you asked to pay taxes allegedly owed to the CRA by making a deposit into a bank account registered to an individual? The CRA does not use personal bank accounts for the purpose of receiving payments and all CRA debts are payable exclusively to the Receiver General for Canada.
  
4. Still not sure? Contact the CRA at 1-800-959-8281 to find out whether the information the individual is providing to you is correct.

For more information about this and other fraud schemes, or to report deceptive telemarketing activity, visit **[www.phonebusters.com](http://www.phonebusters.com)**, send an email to **[info@phonebusters.com](mailto:info@phonebusters.com)**, or call 1-888-495-8501 (toll free).

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