

# CON GAMES, FRAUD, & SWEEPSTAKES SCAMS



## Con Games, Fraud Schemes & Sweepstakes Scams

It's not always easy to spot a CON GAME or FRAUD SCHEME. The con artists are charming and persuasive. It's their job; and they do it well. They can approach you in person, on the phone, over the Internet, or through the media. Most people feel they are too smart to be conned. The fact is, people from all walks of life are defrauded every day and lose billions of dollars every year!

### CON GAMES

#### Pigeon Drop

A stranger approaches you about finding a large sum of money and wants to share it with you. The catch is, you need to put up "good faith" money. Ask yourself why a stranger would want to give you money THEY found? (This is similar to the Nigerian Scam emails constantly being sent out.) <http://www.fbi.gov/scams-safety/fraud>

#### The Bank Examiner

A person claims to be a bank official or detective and wants you to withdraw your money to catch a crooked employee. No bank or police agency will ask you to withdraw money for any reason.

#### The Obit Column Sting

Fast-buck artists send a surviving spouse bills for phony debts, purchases, etc. If you get an unfamiliar bill after the death of a loved one, check it out before you pay. It is also not uncommon for robbers to break into the home of someone recently deceased while the family and friends are at the funeral. The information as to time and location of the funeral is usually published in the obituary.

#### Home Repairs

Beware of unsolicited home repair deals that offer unbelievable discounts. Often these deals result in shoddy workmanship, inferior materials and incomplete jobs.

#### The Pyramid Scheme

Someone offers you a chance to invest in an up-and-coming company with a guaranteed high return. The idea is that you invest and ask others to do the same. You get a share of each investment you recruit. They recruit others, and so on. When the pyramid collapses (either the pool of new investors dries up or the swindler is caught), everyone loses — except the person at the top.

**A GOOD RULE TO FOLLOW: IF IT SEEMS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE, IT PROBABLY IS.**

### FRAUD SCHEMES

#### Medical Fraud

Offers "miracle cures", lab tests, etc. Beware: see your physician if you have health problems.

#### Charity Fraud

Give only to charities you are familiar with. Call the Better Business Bureau if in doubt. Listen carefully to the name of the charity requesting money. Fraudulent charities often use names that sound like a reputable, well-known organization such as the American Cancer Association (instead of the American Cancer Society). Ask for a financial report before you donate; a reputable charity will always send you one.

#### Vacation/Travel Fraud

Offers free or low cost travel. Beware of hidden costs.

#### Foreign Lotteries

Illegal. They ask you to pay taxes to collect your "winnings."

#### Investments

Get rich quick, Pyramid, and Ponzi schemes. Check out the company before you invest.

#### Recovery Fraud

Offer to help you recover the money you lost to other fraud schemes!

