

YOU'RE A WINNER!!! TRUE OR FALSE?

TRAP

Cynthia in North Palm Beach received a telephone call congratulating her on winning a European lottery. Documents would soon be sent informing her how to claim the money. Cynthia checked her Caller ID and was happy to see the call originated in Palm Beach County. As promised she received a check in the mail made out to her for \$10,000. She was instructed to deposit the check, then wire transfer part of it for taxes, and keep the rest. She was promised the balance of the prize money would be sent to her after the taxes were paid. After a few days the bank notified her that the \$10,000 winning European lottery check had bounced and she was responsible for the bounced check fees!

Tips

If you get a phone call, letter or e-mail claiming "**YOU WON!**" -- be skeptical.

- **Be aware that if you play a foreign lottery, through the mail, e-mail or over the telephone, you are violating Federal Law.**
- **Do not pay to collect a prize or winnings.** If you have to pay to collect your prize or winnings, you have not won anything. Legitimate sweepstakes or contests **DO NOT** require you to pay for "insurance", "taxes" or "shipping & handling" to collect the prize/money.
- **Fake checks scams.** The check may look legitimate but it is a trick to get you to deposit the check and wire the money. By the time the bank finds out it is a fake, your money is gone. The money you wired cannot be recovered and you are responsible for the check you deposited even if you did not know it was fake.
- **Phone numbers can be deceiving.** Some con artists use Internet technology to call you and this allows them to disguise their area code. Even if it looks like they are calling from your local area they could be calling from anywhere in the world.

**For more information OR to file a complaint, contact
Palm Beach County Consumer Affairs at 561-712-6600
(Boca/Delray 888-852-7362 toll free)**

www.pbcgov/consumer