

Press Release

The Town of Poughkeepsie Police Department warns residents about on-going “lottery phone scams” following two complaints made to police by town residents. Victims are typically notified by e-mail, phone or direct mail that they have won money in a lottery yet have to pay transfer fees, taxes or provide proof of their identity and details of their bank accounts or credit cards in order to receive their “winnings”. Often, scammers will request payment be made by money orders.

Residents should remember that you cannot win a legitimate lottery if you have not entered it and in almost all cases, you must purchase a ticket to enter a legitimate lottery. You never have to pay to collect winnings from a legitimate lottery, there are no “other fees” and you pay taxes after you receive the winnings. If you hold a winning lottery ticket, you notify the lottery. The lottery does not notify you. Never provide personal identity information to a company or person you do not know. Furthermore, it is illegal under U.S. federal law to play any foreign lottery from the United States.

Lottery phone scams are always emerging given the age of modern communication technologies. Many calls are placed from computers, not telephones, and utilize a software to mask their phone number and make it appear as if they are representing someone different. There are many ways to verify authenticity before you act, such as contacting the New York State Better Business Bureau’s consumer representative or your local Post Office. Additionally, you can have your phone number placed on the “do not call” list by going to www.donotcall.gov . For more information, contact Town of Poughkeepsie Community Policing Officer Gary Hulbert at 845-486-7845.