



Crime Prevention Tips

Mass Marketing Fraud



Crime Prevention is Everyone's Responsibility

General

Deceptive or misleading mailouts and phone calls, including fake lotteries, continue to dupe unsuspecting victims, particularly seniors, into sending money. They may believe that sending \$20 to win a sweepstakes isn't much money but scam artists are collecting thousands, sometimes millions, of dollars from innocent people in this manner.

The following tips will help consumers to protect themselves from becoming victims of mass marketing fraud.

Recognize It

- Do not pay for any prize. A legitimate prize offering does not require you to pay anything.
- Be suspicious of free gifts where a registration or administrative fee is required or where a salesperson may be invited to your home.
- Sweepstakes scams may include puzzles and games. Just because it is fun doesn't mean it's not fraudulent.
- Be careful if a prize offer requests that you send them personal information.
- Please remember that if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

Report It

- Report such incidents, even if the amount of money involved is low. Law enforcement agencies cannot investigate and determine if any offence has taken place unless consumers report these crimes.
- Report such incidents, even if there is a disclaimer on the flyer. If the promises refer to guaranteed winnings in large print, the practice still may be considered to be misleading and therefore, against the law. Putting a disclaimer on the announcement may not protect the business from charges of misleading or unconscionable practices.

Stop It

- The Business Practices and Consumer Protection Authority (BPCPA) has expertise in administering consumer protection legislation, including using progressive enforcement tools to protect consumers.
- The BPCPA has a toll free line (1-888-564-9963) and website (www.bpcpa.ca) to help consumers with their complaints and inquiries.

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"A Fair Marketplace for BC Consumers and Businesses"

For more information about your rights and responsibilities
as a consumer or business, please contact us at:

www.bpcpa.ca Toll Free: 1-888-564-9963 Email: info@bpcpa.ca

More crime prevention tips: www.bccpa.org



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The Business Practices & Consumer Protection Authority of British Columbia

Who we are

The Business Practices and Consumer Protection Authority (BPCPA) promotes a fair marketplace for consumers and businesses. We were established in 2004 as a not-for-profit corporation to strengthen consumer protection in BC.

What we do

The BPCPA delivers consumer protection services throughout BC by:

- Responding to inquiries and complaints from BC consumers and businesses;
- Educating consumers and businesses about their rights and responsibilities;
- Licensing specific industries;
- Inspecting these licensed industries to ensure they are in accordance with BC's consumer protection laws;
- Investigating alleged violations of consumer protection laws and following up with progressive enforcement action; and
- Providing recommendations to government regarding enhancements to BC's consumer protection laws.

We help protect consumers

British Columbia's consumer protection laws provide the framework to help us protect consumers. Through our website and toll-free inquiry line, we provide BC's public with information on how to become more informed consumers. If you have an inquiry or concern about a consumer transaction in BC, we may be able to provide referrals or assistance to help you resolve the matter.

We help support a level playing field for BC businesses

We are here to make sure that the businesses we license meet certain standards, including financial, educational and reporting requirements. The BPCPA is responsible for regulating the following industries:

- Travel (travel agencies and wholesalers)
- Telemarketing
- Debt collection (including debt collection agencies, debt collectors, bailiffs and debt poolers)
- Cremation, interment and funeral services (including funeral service providers, funeral directors, embalmers, cemeteries and crematoria)
- Motion Pictures (including the classification of exhibited films, approval of adult video, and licensing of theatres, retailers and distributors).

Get in touch with us

If you have questions about your rights and responsibilities as a consumer or a business, or you wish to find out about lodging a complaint about the industries we regulate, please contact us.

Inquiry Centre: Toll free 1-888-564-9963

Visit us at: www.bpcpa.ca

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