

Fake Publishers Clearing House scams

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Most of us have seen those ads with Publishers Clearing House knocking on someone's door with balloons and a big check for millions. It's a life-changing moment marked by joyous tears. Dreams are about to come true.

But the FTC wants to be sure your tears are not sad ones and the dream doesn't wind up being a nightmare, because scammers are pretending to be Publishers Clearing House and tricking people into sending them money.

Publishers Clearing House and the FTC have both gotten many reports about scammers using the Publishers Clearing House name to deceive people. Scammers call, claiming you've won the sweepstakes – but, to collect your prize, you need to send money to pay for so-called fees and taxes.

Paying to collect a prize is a scam. Every time. And scammers like to ask you to send money by Western Union or MoneyGram, or by getting a prepaid card or gift card. Why? Because it's nearly impossible to trace that money – and you'll almost never get your money back.

If you think you've won a prize, here are a few things to know:

- Publishers Clearing House will never ask you to pay a fee to collect a prize. In fact, no legit prize promoter will ever charge you to win.
- If anyone calls asking you to pay for a prize, hang up and **report it to the FTC**.
- Never send money to collect a prize. It's a scam.

And here's another insider tip: Publisher's Clearing House doesn't call ahead to say you've won.

Did you send money to a prize scammer, or know someone who has? Report the loss immediately to the company you paid through (Western Union, MoneyGram, the prepaid or gift card company). And then **tell the FTC**. And, if you wired money to a scammer via Western Union between January 1, 2004 and January 19, 2017, you might be eligible for a refund. **Learn more**.

Check out **Publishers Clearing House's fraud protection page**, and learn more from the FTC about **prize scams**.

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