



FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION
CONSUMER INFORMATION
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Scams in the name of charity

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Scammers are creative, cunning and cruel — and they often mix in a little truth to spice up their big lies. This scheme shows just how low they can go.

Government imposters claiming to be with the FTC, or another agency like the fictitious “Consumer Protection Agency,” are calling to inform people they have won a huge sweepstakes from the Make-a-Wish Foundation, a well-known charity for very sick children. To get the money, the callers say, the “winner” must first pay thousands of dollars to cover taxes or insurance on the prize. The call may even come from a 202 (Washington, DC) area code to appear credible — since the headquarters for the FTC and most federal agencies are in DC.

This is just a scheme using the well-known names of Make-a-Wish and the FTC to rob thousands of dollars from people. Once you wire money or send banking information, you will never see your money again.

Here are a few facts and tips to protect yourself and others:

- If someone asks you to wire money or provide your bank account information over the telephone, it’s a scam.
- Anytime you have to pay to get a prize, it’s a scam.
- The FTC doesn’t oversee sweepstakes and no FTC staff is involved in giving out sweepstakes prizes. We do, however, go after sweepstakes scams like this one.
- If an FTC case results in refunds, you can find the details at ftc.gov/redress.
- The Make-a-Wish Foundation has information about this specific scam on its fraud alerts page.
- If you encounter this or other scams, report it to the FTC at 1-877-FTC-HELP or ftc.gov/complaint.
- Talk to your friends and family about scams. Visit FTC.gov/PassItOn to find out how.

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