



# LINCOLNWOOD POLICE DEPARTMENT

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6900 N. Lincoln Avenue, Lincolnwood, IL 60712

(847) 673-2167

Jason S. Parrott  
Chief of Police

## Consumer Fraud – Community Alert

Lawbreakers use clever schemes to defraud millions of victims annually. They combine sophisticated technology with long-standing methods tricking people into sending money or giving out personal information. These extremely persuasive confidence criminals pressure consumers to make important decisions immediately. Listed below are warning signs to recognize these swindles:

- Callers identifying themselves as representatives of government agencies, utility companies or service providers will target customers by phone for instant sales decisions. If you have any questions regarding these claims, contact their agency or corporate website directly to obtain phone numbers and verify the offer
- Prize offers. If the deal sounds too good to be true, then it probably is
- Exercise extreme caution on any “Get rich quick” or “Something for nothing” proposition received by phone or mail
- For example: That \$20,000 “prize” may cost you hundreds of dollars in taxes or service charges – and then never arrive
- Scammers convince consumers to wire money to a foreign country using a well-known insurance company to guarantee delivery of the “prize.” Con-artists then steal this money and disappear
- Homeowners receive phone calls from scammers pretending to be family members needing cash sent immediately due to an arrest or illness
- Don’t allow solicitors into your home including those purporting to be landscapers, storm damage technicians or various energy companies
- Internet fraud involving emails requesting personal information like bank account numbers, social security numbers and dates of birth should be disregarded and deleted. Never give out this information by phone or mail to solicitors
- Phone scams, lotteries and sweepstakes – **Just hang up the phone!** Do not respond to mailed inquiries. Limit the criminal’s opportunity to swindle you
- Document the scam with the Illinois Attorney General’s Office and file a Consumer Complaint Form from their website:

<http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/consumers/index.html>

If you suspect you have been the victim of fraud, please call the Lincolnwood Police Department at (847) 673-2167.