

### **Lottery scam using fake trust cheques and fake letterhead**

A new lottery scam using the "B.C. 6/49" jackpot name has surfaced in British Columbia. The scamster uses the names of two real BC law firms (or a law firm and a BC notary), fake law firm letterhead, a fake law firm trust cheque and a fake lottery win.

An individual in the United States receives a letter written on fake law firm letterhead telling them that they have won a BC lottery (e.g. \$279,000). The law firm's address is in British Columbia. The name of the law firm is real but the contact information is altered.

A fake trust cheque drawn on a Canadian bank and in a second British Columbia law firm's name is enclosed with the letter. The letter says the trust cheque represents an advance payment (e.g. \$7,980.00 US). The second law firm's name is real and its trust account numbers are correct. If the cheque is cashed without the financial institution realizing it's a fake, the money would come out of the trust account of an unsuspecting BC law firm.

The law firm letter says that the firm has been requested to prepare some documents (e.g. tax forms) required prior to the release of the funds. The lump sum payout is to commence once the documents are filed. The "winner" is informed that they must pay some processing fees, legal fees, an insurance premium and federal taxes (the projected amount exceeds the amount of the advance).

The winner is given telephone numbers to call immediately and told that failure to comply will result in forfeiting the prize.

At this point, the British Columbia firms whose names were used did not lose money from their trust accounts. They have contacted the police and their banks and have taken steps to protect their accounts.

If a fraudster has attempted to scam you, please report it to the RCMP or your municipal police force and also contact the Law Society. You can ask the police to report the matter to PhoneBusters, the Canadian Anti-fraud Call Centre (CAFF) or you can do it yourself (1-888-495-8501). CAFF (a form of partnership between the Ontario Provincial Police, the RCMP and the Competition Bureau) seems particularly interested in receiving information on new versions of the Nigerian letter scheme, especially those with Canadian mailing addresses and telephone numbers.

You are welcome to contact Practice Advisor Barbara Buchanan at 604-697-5816 or [bbuchanan@lsbc.org](mailto:bbuchanan@lsbc.org) for further advice or information.