



# NEWS FROM SCDCA

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS  
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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### *Scam Alert: Scammers Find New Way to Steal Money*

**Columbia, SC...**The South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs (SCDCA) is warning consumers of a new payment method for scams. While wire transfer is the most common method of payment requested by scammers, fraudsters are increasingly asking for payment via prepaid money card. Approximately 20% of SCDCA's scam reports in recent months involve the prepaid card request, which makes funds difficult to track.

This new twist can be applied to a variety of common ruses, including lottery/sweepstakes, imposter, and loan scams. If a consumer receives a call asking for payment via prepaid card, they should remember the following tips:

- When fielding cold calls, someone asking for payment via untraceable methods (wire transfer/ prepaid cards) is a red flag.
- Allowing a scammer access to the card's serial number or the card is like giving them cash. There is no refund policy for prepaid cards.
- Aggressiveness and/or an inability to answer a consumer's questions are indications that the call is fraudulent.
- Caller ID can be spoofed. Just because the caller's phone number looks legitimate, does not mean that it is.
- Utility companies will not call a consumer to collect a late payment, but will mail notices before disconnecting service.
- Legitimate lotteries or sweepstakes do not require a consumer to pay a fee to collect a prize if they've actually won.

For more information on scams visit our website at [www.consumer.sc.gov](http://www.consumer.sc.gov) and click on Consumer Information, then Consumer Education.

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SCDCA aims to protect consumers from inequities in the marketplace through advocacy, complaint mediation, enforcement and education. To file a complaint or get information on consumer issues, visit [www.consumer.sc.gov](http://www.consumer.sc.gov) or call toll-free, 1.800.922.1594.

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