



Protect Yourself From The “Nigerian” Email Scam

The Bait:

Con artists contact you claiming to be officials, businesspeople, or the surviving spouses of former government officials in Nigeria or another country whose money is somehow tied up for a limited time. They offer to transfer lots of money into your bank account if you will pay a fee or “taxes” to help them access their money. If you respond to the initial offer, you may receive documents that look “official.” Then they ask you to send money to cover transaction and transfer costs and attorney's fees, your bank account numbers, or other information. They may even encourage you to travel to Nigeria or a border country to complete the transaction. Some fraudsters have even produced trunks of dyed or stamped money to verify their claims.

The Catch:

The emails are from crooks trying to steal your money or perpetrate identity theft. Inevitably, emergencies come up, requiring more of your money and delaying the “transfer” of funds to your account; in the end, there aren't any profits for you, and the scam artist vanishes with your money. Responding to these types of “pay in advance” scams can lead to serious financial and even bodily harm.

How to protect yourself

If you receive an email from someone claiming to need your help getting money out of a foreign country, don't respond, don't give them your personal or banking information and don't pay any money. If they really had millions to transfer, why would they need your money?

If you have been contacted by one of these “Nigerian” scams, forward the message — including all the email addressing information — to spam@uce.gov.

If you have lost money or have been contacted by telephone or mail regarding the scheme, you may file a complaint with the **U.S. Secret Service, Financial Crimes Division, 1800 G Street NW, Room 942, Washington DC 20223**.



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