

# The dangers of joining an office pool for Tuesday's \$1.6 billion Mega Millions jackpot

- Lottery ticket pools are popular in offices for coworkers to increase their chances of striking the jackpot.
- The statistical difference between entering alone or in a group is negligible, and winning as part of a group can be problematic.
- The Mega Millions lottery for Tuesday's drawing is \$1.6 billion.

Laura Galligan | @GalliganLaura

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Mark Ralston | AFP | Getty Images

A man reaches for his Mega Millions tickets hours before the draw of the USD 1 billion jackpot, at the Bluebird Liquor store in Torrance, California on October 19, 2018.

"Strength in numbers" doesn't apply to Tuesday's [\\$1.6 billion Mega Millions jackpot](#). Experts say problems can stem from joining an office pool.

The [odds of winning](#) the headliner prize stand at 1 in 302,575,350. Joining forces with coworkers only marginally increases your chances, and can create logistical and legal headaches should you be lucky enough to win.

"The main benefit of joining a pool is the camaraderie," said Jason Kurland, a partner at Rivkin Radler, a law firm in Uniondale, New York. "I get that part of it, but I think that's the only pro. Most people don't do [pools] the right way."

Here's how to smooth the process:

## Keep good records

Create a document listing all of the members of the pool, as well as photocopies of all the tickets in the pool, Kurland said. That makes it clear who's in the pool, and which tickets belong to the group (versus say, the pool organizer).

"There are a lot of litigations where people didn't clearly outline the process," Kurland said.

Circulate those pool agreements and details via email before the drawing, so that the time and date are documented, said Rogge Dunn, founder of the Rogge Dunn Group, a law firm based in Dallas.

## Set some ground rules

Decide in advance how you'll split the winnings, if you're buying multiple rounds of group tickets and have different participants in each. Dunn said he has seen lawsuits stemming from such situations, where winners squabble over what's a fair share for someone who jumped on the bandwagon in a later round, versus someone who contributed to all rounds of ticket purchases.



Here are the odds of you winning the lottery

## Plan a claims strategy

Ahead of the drawing, think about how you will claim the money.

"It's a little bit of work on the front end to avoid a big expensive lawsuit on the back end," Dunn said.

Kurland said the pool leader in possession of the ticket should contact the group immediately.

The leader should then find a lottery lawyer, who can help the

participants form a limited liability corporation, trust or other entity. State rules vary and some lottery commissions will only pay out to a fixed number of individuals, which may necessitate an LLC to make sure all participants get their prize money equally, he said.



**Laura Galligan**  
Newsroom Fellow



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