

FRAUD ALERT!

The Grandparent Scam

A scam that is commonly known as the Grandparent Scam and sometimes called the Emergency Scam, has resurfaced once again. According to the Federal Trade Commission they are seeing a real rise in these kinds of what is known as money transfer scams.

Older adults are contacted, usually late at night, by a scammer posing as a panicked grandchild. The caller simply states, "It's me, your favorite grandchild," or "It's me, Grandma," or another variation might be, "Hi Grandma, do you know who this is?" The unsuspecting grandparent will guess the name of the grandchild it sounds the most like, and then continue to feed personal information to the scammer. The alleged grandchild typically explains that they were arrested, have an emergency, were involved in an auto accident or got into trouble while traveling. Often the caller claims to be in a foreign city or a remote place and is in desperate need of immediate help.

At this point, the "grandchild" needs the grandparent to wire money immediately for bail or to pay for damages. In addition, the scammer will beg the unsuspecting grandparent not to contact other relatives because he or she does not want to "get in trouble" or does not want to "upset everyone."

Law enforcement officials are not certain how perpetrators are obtaining the phone numbers for so many seniors or senior housing complexes across the U.S. It is believed that scammers are most likely calling random numbers until they reach a senior citizen and/or research senior housing units on the internet. While many seniors have reported the scam without falling prey to it, unfortunately, many others have been victimized. Once that money has been wired, it evaporates. There is almost no way to get this money back.

The key to avoiding this scam is to:

- Remain calm despite the 'emergency' nature of the call. Resist the pressure to "act now."
- Make attempts to verify the identity of the caller i.e. ask questions about the name of their grade school, a pet, another relative or a childhood memory only a close relative would know.
- Contact the actual grandchild's home or cell phone, or other family members directly to verify the story before taking any further action.
- Understand that a request to wire money through Western Union or MoneyGram is a "red flag" and an immediate tip-off that the call may be part of a scam. Funds sent via wire transfer are hard to track once received by scammers and are usually not recoverable by law enforcement or banking officials.

If you or someone you know was a victim of this or another scam, please contact your local police department and/or a member of the Bucks County Crimes Against Older Adults Task Force.

BUCKS COUNTY CRIMES AGAINST OLDER ADULTS TASK FORCE

Bucks County District Attorney's Office
215-348-6344

Bucks County Area Agency on Aging
215-348-0510

Bucks County Coroner's Office
215-348-3852

Network of Victim Assistance (NOVA)
1-800-675-6900

A Woman's Place (AWP)
1-800-220-8116

Bucks County Office of Consumer Protection
215-348-6060

Bucks County Register of Wills
215-348-6265

**US Dept. of Health and Human Services
Investigations, Office of the Inspector General**

www.crimesagainstolderadultsbucks.org
24 - HOUR HOTLINE: 1-800-490-8505