



A Program with the
Colorado Attorney General
and the AARP Foundation



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Better Business Bureau
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“It’s Me!”- Emergency Scam on the Rise

The past few months have seen a drastic increase in the number of seniors who have been contacted via telephone with the “Emergency Scam”. It has also been referred to as the “Grandparent Scam” due to its tendency to be targeted toward the elderly population. Often those who are targeted have large numbers of grandchildren which makes it harder for them to identify the caller.

Typically the caller will say: “It’s Me”, waiting for the person who answered the phone to identify someone he or she knows, which can often be a grandchild.

Once this has happened: The caller pretends to be that person and proceeds to claim that they need money for an emergency situation.

The reasons they might need money can be: Almost anything from bail money in order to get out of jail to money for medical help for a car accident that they were just in. Whatever the reason, they always assert that they need the money immediately.

To protect themselves, the con-artist will specifically ask the victim: Not to contact other relatives because the caller doesn't want to “get in trouble” with other family members.

The final step is to persuade the victim to send them money: The perpetrator will always ask that the money be sent through an electronic money transfer, oftentimes to somewhere such as Canada where American law enforcement would have trouble seeking justice in the aftermath. Once money is transferred through a wire service the chances of getting it back are very slim.

Ways to Protect Yourself

- Resist the pressure to “act now”. Don’t Panic.
- Anyone calling and asking for money in an "emergency" situation should be asked a lot of questions, including personal questions that only that person should know, such as the name of their grade school, a pet’s name, or the name of another relative.
- Be aware that this scam is happening and warn others as well.

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