

GRANDPARENT SCAMS

HOW THE SCAMS WORK:

Scammers target elderly individuals by claiming to be a grandchild or relative, or a lawyer representing a grandchild or relative, who is in desperate need of legal or financial assistance. Often, these schemes involve claims of being arrested (commonly in Mexico) or in some type of accident.

The scammers create a sense of URGENCY and make desperate pleas for money. The scammer begs the grandparents not to tell the parents while often crying to help prevent the potential victims from discovering the scam.

Once potential victims appear to believe the scammer, they are provided instructions to usually wire transfer money to an individual, often referred to as a “bail bondsman,” for their grandchild to be released by law enforcement.

***Often phone numbers are “spoofed” and may look like a legitimate number on caller ID.

***Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered voice-cloning technology is also being used to make scammers’ calls more believable and actually sound like your grandchild.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO AVOID BEING VICTIMIZED?

DO NOT COMPLY WITH THE CALLER’S INSTRUCTIONS!!!

- Simply hang up on the unknown caller and/or do not respond to emails or text messages. If you have caller ID, do not answer calls from phone numbers which are unknown to you. Be sure to block these phone numbers.
- Contact the relative the scammer’s claimed to be on his/her cell phone, or other family members to confirm the supposed relative’s whereabouts and well-being. The few minutes it takes to confirm the phone call could save thousands of dollars in fraud loss.
- Search online for the contact information (name, email, phone number, addresses) and the proposed offer. Other people have likely posted information online about individuals and businesses trying to run scams.

*****NO** legitimate Law Enforcement or Government Agency (even in Mexico) will ask for or accept gift cards, wire transfers, and/or cryptocurrency as payment, or use a courier to collect money from you.