

Grandparents Beware

Have you received an urgent phone call from a grandchild, police officer or a good friend stating that your grandchild has been hurt, is in jail or in trouble and needs hundreds of dollars immediately? Please beware that this is the new scam being targeted to seniors. These scamming thieves are conniving and pretend to be a close relative. Their goal is to get the senior to feel sorry for them and urgently send them money (thousands!).

The imposter has done his/her research by finding personal and specific family information on the internet, such as a grandchild's facebook page, email contact list, marketing lists with names and numbers or any other source that can be reached by the public.

These scamming thieves prey on senior citizens believing they are easy targets. The scammers will try to make their story sound urgent and confidential by saying things like, "please don't tell anyone until I'm back in the country, out of jail," or whatever the situation is they tell you. Their reasoning is that they do not want you to check with other family members to see if the story is true. They want their money quickly and will persist in any way to convince you to send it to them.

How to protect yourself from scammers ~

1. If you receive a call or email that a family member is in trouble and asking for money, call another family member to find out if the story is true. Take your time and resist any urge to "act now." Keep contacting others and do your research even if you have to call a number of people to find out. Sooner or later you will receive the truth about the incident.
2. Talk with your family members and create a code word that only family members use when they are in trouble. If the scammer does not know what the code word is, then it is obvious that he/she is trying to pull a fast one over you.
3. Never wire money to anyone unless you are sure about to whom and why you are wiring the money.
4. Always be safe and cautious.

For further information on the latest "Grandparent Scam" go to:

www.NJConsumerAffairs.gov/fedup/ - NJ state division of consumer affairs

www.consumerfed.org/fraud - CFA – Consumer Federation of America to watch the "Grandparent Scam Informational Video"

www.ftc.gov – Toll free 1-877-382-4357. Federal Trade commission. Works with keeping consumers safe from fraud, deceptive and unfair business practices.

www.OnGuardOnline.gov – online security tips

www.fraud.org – Hotline: 202-835-3323. National Fraud Information Center/Internet Fraud Watch. Provides consumers with information to help avoid them in becoming a victim of fraud.

www.pbcgov/consumer - Palm Beach County Division of Consumer Protection
Toll free – 1-888-852-7362