

SPOTLIGHT: GRANDPARENT SCAMS

“Grandma, I’m in the hospital, sick, please wire money right away!”

“Grandpa, I’m stuck overseas, please send money!”

“I’VE KIDNAPPED YOUR GRANDCHILD, SEND ME \$2000 AND I’LL LET THEM GO.”

HOW THE SCAM WORKS

You get a call or an email unexpectedly from someone who claims to be a friend or relative, maybe opening with a line like “Hi Grandma/Grandpa! Do you know who this is?”, or something similar. The scammer hopes you will respond with a name that they can use to pose as your grandchild. The caller says there’s an emergency and asks you to send money immediately or that they have kidnapped one of your family members. But beware, there’s a good chance this is an imposter trying to steal your money! Follow these tips to avoid becoming a victim of fraud.



DON'T BE A VICTIM



- **Verify** that it is your grandchild by contacting their parents or asking a question only your real grandchildren or family member would know the answer to. Call a phone number for your family member or friend that you know to be genuine. Check the story out with someone else in your family or circle of friends, even if you’ve been told to keep it a secret.



- **Resist** pressure to send money quickly and secretly. Always tell a family member or report it to your local police department.
- **Refuse** to send money through wire transfer, cash or gift cards – once the scammer gets the money, it’s gone!

WHAT TO DO IF YOU’VE BEEN SCAMMED

- If you sent money through a transfer service like Western Union or MoneyGram, contact the money transfer service immediately to report the scam. If the money hasn’t been picked up, you can retrieve it; if it’s gone, it’s most likely gone forever.
- Report the scam to the South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs by calling 1 (844) TELL-DCA (835-5322) or [filing a scam report online](#).

For more information on protecting yourself from identity theft, visit www.consumer.sc.gov and click Identity Theft Resources.



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