

ePrevent

Public Safety Announcement - September 2015

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Protect Yourself

- If you realize you've been scammed, contact the money transfer service immediately to report the scam. If the money has not been picked up you can retrieve it.
- Use firewall and anti-virus software. Keep your software updated and don't open attachments in emails from strangers or unusual emails from people you know. An example of an unusual email is an email with no message from the sender but just a link.

GRANDPARENT SCAM

This scam targets mainly seniors or those that are grandparents. The scam involves a phone call where the caller is claiming to be the grandchild and in urgent need of money due to an accident, an arrest or other problem. The caller will ask the grandparent to wire money to a foreign country or send a check and many grandparents that are eager to help put aside their reservations and fall victim to this scam.

How the Scam Works. The consumer receives a phone call initiated with a phrase like, "Hi Grandma/Grandpa! Do you know who this is?" The "grandchild" describes some type of emergency, often in a foreign country, and begs the grandparent to immediately wire money. By claiming that they are embarrassed or there is no time to talk to others, the con artist tries to dissuade the grandparent from contacting the grandchild's parents or friends.

Tips to Avoid this Scam:

Verify the caller's identity. Contact a family member who could confirm the caller's story. Try contacting the real grandchild at a number you know is accurate.

Resist pressure to act quickly. This scam depends upon a relative's compassion for someone outweighing any concern about potential scams. The various excuses created by fraudsters almost always involve an emergency and a desire for secrecy. Fraudsters ask for secrecy because they know if you contact another family member, you will become aware of the scam.

You should only wire transfer money if you are certain of the caller's identity, particularly if the caller wants you to wire the money to a foreign country. Remember, if you wire money, it may be impossible to retrieve the money once it is sent. The money is virtually untraceable, and law enforcement agencies have little success in recovering wired funds.

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