

What is a Scam?

A scam is a trick a con artist plays on an unsuspecting victim to extort money. If the scam succeeds, the victim's money is gone, and the scammer will move on to the next victim.



A scammer is the ultimate salesperson with a tempting offer or a skilled liar with a plausible story

- Easily pinpoints a victim's vulnerabilities and appeals to emotions: sympathy, fear, loneliness
- Quickly gains trust
- Insist on secrecy
- Shows no mercy, e.g., doesn't take "no" for an answer

Know the Red Flags of a Scam

- Immediate action required
- Insistence on secrecy
- Money needed up front
- Hard-to-track payment methods

Build Your Scam Defenses

- Do not be rushed into any financial decision
- Assume that insistence on secrecy is a ploy to deceive you
- Be suspicious of any situation that requires you to send money up front
- Confirm all stories, offers or charities independently
- Be very cautious about clicking on email links

Block Those Scammers

- Register with National Do Not Call Registry at www.donotcall.gov to limit legitimate telemarketing phone calls, making phone scams easier to detect
- Register with www.DMAchoice.org to limit legitimate advertising mail, making mail scams easier to detect
- Limit personal information on social media and choose the strictest privacy settings on social media accounts
- Use antivirus software on your computer

What to Do If You Are Scammed

- Don't be embarrassed or afraid
- Tell someone you trust
- Report the scam to your bank immediately to limit losses
- Contact your local police and federal agencies, like the Federal Trade Commission

For more information, visit aba.com/Seniors



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Ways to Spot a Lottery Scam



According to the FBI, in 2014 consumers lost more than \$8 million to solicitation scams. These scams, commonly referred to as “advance fee,” “lottery” or “sweepstake” scam, often begin with fraudsters telling the victim they’ve won a lottery or sweepstake raffle. The consumer is issued a check worth more than the amount owed and instructed to pay taxes and fees before receiving a lump sum payment. Unfortunately, the check—in addition to the raffle—is bogus.

- 1. Don’t be fooled by the appearance of the check.** Scam artists are using sophisticated technology to create legitimate looking counterfeit checks. Some are counterfeit money orders, some are phony cashier’s checks and others look like they are from legitimate business accounts. The company name may be real, but someone has forged the checks without their knowledge.
- 2. Never “pay to play.”** There is no legitimate reason for someone who is giving you money to ask you to wire money back or send you more than the exact amount—that’s a red flag that it’s a scam. If a stranger wants to pay you for something, insist on a cashier’s check for the exact amount, preferably from a local bank or one with a local branch.
- 3. Verify the requestor before you wire or issue a check.** It is important to know who you are sending money to before you send it. Just because someone contacted you doesn’t mean they are a trusted source.
- 4. Ensure a check has “cleared” to be most safe.** Under federal law, banks must make deposited funds available quickly, but just because you can withdraw the money doesn’t mean the check is good, even if it’s a cashier’s check or money order. Be sure to ask if the check has cleared, not merely if the funds are available before you decide to spend the money.
- 5. Report any suspected fraud to your bank immediately.** Bank staff are experts in spotting fraudulent checks. If you think someone is trying to pull a fake check scam, don’t deposit it—report it. Contact your local bank or the National Consumers League’s Fraud Center, fraud.org.

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Don't Fall Victim to the Grandparent Scam

According to the Federal Trade Commission, between 2012 and 2014, consumers reported more than \$42 million in losses from scams involving the impersonation of family members and friends. This scam, commonly known as the “grandparent scam,” is a form of financial abuse that deliberately targets older Americans.

To commit this crime, fraudsters call claiming to be a family member in serious trouble and in need of money immediately. The scammer might say he’s stranded or has been mugged, and call in the middle of the night to add to the urgency and confusion. Once the money is wired, the victim later finds out that it wasn’t their grandchild they were helping, it was a criminal.

- **Confirm the caller.** Fraudsters are using social networking sites to gain the personal information of friends and relatives to carry out their crimes. Verify the caller by calling them back on a known number or consult a trusted family member before acting on any request.
- **Don’t be afraid to ask questions.** Fraudsters want to execute their crimes quickly. In this type of scam, they count on fear and your concern for your loved one to make you act before you think. The more questions you ask the more inclined they will be to ditch the scam if they suspect you’re on to them.
- **Never give personal information to anyone over the phone** unless you initiated the call and the other party is trusted.
- **Never rush into a financial decision and trust your instincts.** Don’t be fooled—if something doesn’t feel right, it may not be right. Feel free to say no and get more information before you send money to someone.

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Identifying Scams and Preventing Identity Theft

Resource Sheet

Organization Name	What It Provides What You Can Do	How to Contact
AARP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up-to-date information on recent frauds that exploit the elderly Financial Caregiver information 	www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud (888) 687-2277
Better Business Bureau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scam alerts Reporting scams 	www.bbb.org (703) 276-0100
Charity Navigator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locate a scorecard for registered charities 	www.charitynavigator.org
Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) Office of Older Americans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information and tools for managing finances and preventing financial exploitation Fraud alert 	www.consumerfinance.gov/older-americans (855) 411-2327
Consumer.gov	Information on scams and identity theft	www.consumer.gov
Consumer Credit Reporting Agencies -Equifax -Experian -Transunion	Place a fraud alert to receive a free credit report from each agency	www.equifax.com www.experian.com www.transunion.com
Annual Credit Report.com	Free copy of your credit report from each major credit rating agency once every 12 months	www.annualcreditreport.com
Do Not Call Registry	Register for "Do Not Call" list	www.donotcall.gov (888)382-1222
Direct Mail Association	Register for "Do Not Mail" List	www.dmaconsumers.org/cgi/offmailinglist/
Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)	Information on protecting yourself against scams	www.fbi.gov/scams-safety/fraud/seniors
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How banks help victims of identity theft 	www.fdic.gov/consumers/assistance/protection/index.html (877) 275-3342
Federal Trade Commission (FTC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warning signs of identity theft Report identity theft Get scam alerts Tips for protecting credit and debit cards 	http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/scam-alerts www.identitytheft.gov

Financial Fraud Enforcement Task Force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice for avoiding and defending against scams and elder fraud • What to do if you're a victim of fraud • Reporting fraud to authorities 	www.stopfraud.gov/report.html (202) 514-2000
National Consumers League (National Fraud Information Center)	Information on avoiding telemarketing and Internet fraud	www.fraud.org (800) 876-7060
OnGuard Online	Information on minimizing your chances of being scammed online	www.onguardonline.gov/topics/avoid-scams
Save and Invest	Instructions for reporting scams, identity theft, and other fraud	www.saveandinvest.org
Social Security Administration	Information about and application for representative payee	www.ssa.gov/payee (800) 772-1213
USA.gov	Information on identifying and protecting yourself against scams and frauds	www.usa.gov/scams-and-frauds (844) 872-4681
Local Emergency Phone Numbers		
	Ukiah City Police Emergency/Business	(707) 463-6262
	Willits Police Department	(707) 459-6122
	Lakeport Police Department	(707) 263-5491
	Fort Bragg Police Department	(707) 961-2800
	Mendocino County Sheriff	(707) 463-4411
	Lake County Sheriff	(707) 262-4200



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