



HOPEDALE POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Chief of Police

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The Hopedale Police Department is asking our senior citizens to be aware of potential fraudsters calling them to scam them of their life savings. Fraudsters typically target senior citizens as they view them to be more willing to communicate with scammers who generally lack computer technology, which makes them more vulnerable to web- or email-based scams; the scammers believe seniors have amassed some wealth over the years; and they can be naïve about the numerous ways in which fraud is committed in modern times.

Fraudsters use a variety of ways to scam senior citizens, and the two most common methods are the grandparent scam and the phone scam. The grandparent scam is where the scammer reaches out to someone who pretends to be their grandchild in financial trouble or they are in jail and need bail money. The fraudster will ask for money immediately and tell their victims to use a wire transfer; if that is not an option, the fraudster will have the victim buy several gift cards and read off the gift card's information. The fraudster will stress urgency on the issue to prevent their victims from contacting other family members, or they will ask the victim to keep it a secret to avoid embarrassment.

The other most common scam used against our senior citizens is a phone scam, where the fraudster identifies himself or herself as an IRS agent or calls them to offer free medical supplements, devices, or discounts. With these types of phone scams, the fraudster attempts to get the victim's personal information (full name, address, date of birth, social security number, and credit card information). Once they have this information, they will immediately deplete the funds on the credit card or try to open additional credit cards or loans.

The best prevention for stopping phone scams is awareness. Awareness of the above scams and many others exists is more than half the battle against elder fraud. Another way to prevent fraudsters from scamming is to keep your personal information private and never give it out over the phone or email. For those who use computers, be cautious of emails and attachments. Do not open emails from senders whose names you don't recognize (delete or block them); never click on a link or open an email attachment you don't know. Remember, emails, links, and attachments spread viruses and give fraudsters access to your computer. Furthermore, you should always consult with family members upon receiving a call or email where an individual or organization is requesting money, gift cards, or personal information.

As a reminder, any resident who feels they were the victim of a scam or if someone is trying to obtain their personal information should contact the Hopedale Police Department.