



Better Business Bureau Senior Awareness Initiative

Consumer Alert

DON'T BECOME A VICTIM OF THE “GRANDPARENT SCAM”

This scam has targeted grandparents in more than a dozen states and Canadian provinces and stolen as much as \$19,000 from one victim alone.

Typically, the grandparent receives a frantic phone call from whom they are led to believe is their grandchild. A scammer, posing as their grandchild, explains that he or she has gotten into trouble—often in Canada—and needs their help. The “grandchild” might claim he or she caused a car accident or was arrested for drug possession. With the new wave of calls, victims are also contacted by someone claiming to be a police officer or lawyer representing the grandchild in court.

The “grandchild” pleads to the grandparents to not tell his or her parents and asks that they wire thousands of dollars for reasons including posting bail, repairing the grandchild’s car, covering lawyer’s fees or even paying hospital bills for a person the grandchild injured in a car accident.

One couple in Wisconsin recently sent \$19,000 to scammers posing as their grandson and his supposed lawyer. The scam has also targeted individuals in Connecticut Iowa, Idaho, Kentucky, Utah, Massachusetts, Missouri, Nebraska, Texas, Washington, West Virginia and Canada including residents of British Columbia and Manitoba.

If you receive a call from someone claiming to be your grandchild in distress:

- **Don’t disclose any information before you have confirmed it really is your grandchild.**
- **If a caller says “It’s me, grandma!” don’t respond with a name but instead let the caller explain who he or she is. One easy way to confirm their identity is to ask a simple question that your grandchild would know such as what school he or she goes to or their middle name.**

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