

Be careful of scams!

The Elder Abuse Unit at the Manhattan District Attorney's Office helps protect older adults from crimes of physical abuse, domestic violence, financial exploitation, and neglect.

Anyone who believes that they may be or know a victim of elder abuse should contact the Manhattan District Attorney's Office's Elder Abuse Unit:

eau@dany.nyc.gov
212-335-9007



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Lottery

Victims are informed that they have won a lottery or a sweepstake but they will need to make a payment to unlock their prize. Often, scammers will ask for bank information or payment by wire, pre-paid gift card or cash picked up by courier.



Romance

The romance scam is typically perpetrated on a dating website or app, social media, or in-person. The scammer perpetrating the scam convinces the victim that they are in love and uses those emotions to trick the unsuspecting victim to send money, e.g. for a sick child, to save a business, to pay for an airplane trip, etc. The scammer usually requests that the money be provided by wire transfer or pre-paid gift cards.



Computer / Phone

Scammers may call you directly on your phone and pretend to be representatives of the tech team at Apple, Microsoft, or other companies. They might even spoof the caller ID so that it displays a legitimate support phone number from a trusted company. They often ask you to install applications that give them remote access to your device. During the call, scammers often identify or create fake problems and offer to fix your "problems" and ask for payment in the form of a one-time fee or subscription to a purported support service.



Grandparent

Scammers will place a call to an older adult. When the victim answers, they will say something along the lines of: "Hi Grandma. Do you know who this is?" When the unsuspecting grandparent guesses a grandchild of theirs, the scammer assumes that identity to extort money. In a similar version of this scam, perpetrators tell the victim that their grandchild has been arrested and they are unable to pay the bail.



IRS / Utility / Car

A caller claims to be collecting a past due debt, often from a utility company, the IRS, or as a settlement for a car accident. Victims are threatened with the loss of utilities, possible deportation, or arrest by law enforcement if they don't make immediate payment by either wiring money, providing their bank or credit card information, or using a pre-paid card.



Mailbox Warning

Groups of individuals are strategically targeting post office collection boxes. They have been stealing mail and taking out checks. They wash off the ink and write in a new amount and cash your check. To keep your checks safe, try to use blue or black gel ink, which is harder to wash off. Also, mail your checks close in time to when the mail carrier will pick up or go directly to the post office.



Social Security

A caller claims to be from the Social Security Administration and demands cash or gift card payments to avoid arrest for purported Social Security number problems. The Social Security Administration will never contact you to tell you:

- Your Social Security number has been suspended.
- Demand an immediate payment.
- Ask you for credit or debit card numbers over the phone.
- Demand that you pay a Social Security debt without the ability to appeal the amount you owe.
- Promise a Social Security benefit approval, or increase, in exchange for information or money.

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212-335-9007

How to Protect Yourself and Your Loved Ones

- Never give out financial or personal information to anyone who contacts you unsolicited.
- Be wary of callers who demand immediate payment for any reason.
- If it seems too good to be true, it probably is. Never be afraid to ask for a second opinion or more information.
- Request to verify the employment of any worker who asks to enter your home.
- Be suspicious of anyone who claims you have won a contest or lottery that you don't remember entering.
- Never wire money, provide debit, credit card, or bank account numbers to people you don't know.
- Legitimate utility companies and government agencies will never demand payment in the form of prepaid gift cards or bitcoin.
- Family members should be vigilant when hiring caregivers for older adults. They should monitor bank accounts and credit card bills for unusual spending and be on the lookout for any signs of physical abuse.

