



Bay Village Press Release

04/04/2016

The Grandparent Scam Don't Let It Happen to You

You're a grandparent, and you get a phone call or an e-mail from someone who identifies himself as your grandson. "I've been arrested in another country," he says, "and need money wired quickly to pay my bail. And oh by the way, don't tell my mom or dad because they'll only get upset!"

This is an example of what's come to be known as "the grandparent scam"—yet another fraud that preys on the elderly, this time by taking advantage of their love and concern for their grandchildren.

The grandparent scam has been around for a few years. But the scam and scam artists have become more sophisticated. Thanks to the Internet and social networking sites, a criminal can sometimes uncover personal information about their targets, which makes the impersonations more believable. For example, the actual grandson may mention on his social networking site that he's a photographer who often travels to Mexico. When contacting the grandparents, the phony grandson will say he's calling from Mexico, where someone stole his camera equipment and passport.

Common scenarios include:

- A grandparent receives a phone call (or sometimes an e-mail) from a "grandchild." If it is a phone call, it's often late at night or early in the morning when most people aren't thinking that clearly. Usually, the person claims to be traveling in a foreign country and has gotten into a bad situation, like being arrested for drugs, getting in a car accident, or being mugged...and needs money wired ASAP. And the caller doesn't want his or her parents told.
- Sometimes, instead of the "grandchild" making the phone call, the criminal pretends to be an arresting police officer, a lawyer, a doctor at a hospital, or some other person. And we've also received complaints about the phony grandchild talking first and then handing the phone over to an accomplice...to further spin the fake tale.
- While it's commonly called the grandparent scam, criminals may also claim to be a family friend, a niece or nephew, or another family member.

What to do if you have been scammed. The financial losses in these cases—while they can be substantial for an individual, usually several thousand dollars per victim. We recommend contacting your local authorities if you think you've been victimized.

And, our advice to avoid being victimized in the first place:

- Resist the pressure to act quickly.
- Try to contact your grandchild or another family member to determine whether or not the call is legitimate.
- Never wire money based on a request made over the phone or in an e-mail...especially overseas. Wiring money is like giving cash—once you send it, you can't get it back.

The above information was posted on the Bay Village Police Facebook page from Detective Jay Elish.

On April 2, 2016 at 11:52am, a resident on Inverness Drive, tried to entice a limping German shepherd with treats, but it ran off. The dog was spotted again near Huntington Beach, but it would not let anyone near it. At 2:30pm, the owner, who had noted the dog's location on social media called the Bay Village Police to say she had captured her dog. It had gone missing 2 weeks prior from the house in Grafton.

On April 2, 2016 at 11:18am, a resident on Roxbury Park Drive received a call advising she had not returned a U-Haul she had rented in Boston, Massachusetts. The resident had not rented the U-Haul. Her driver's license, which was the form of identification used to rent the unit, had been stolen in January while she was vacationing in Key West, Florida.

On March 28, 2016 at 10:10pm, a resident on Saddler Road reported a suspicious truck that has been idling in the roadway for some time. Officer was dispatched and found a First Energy truck, with a First Energy employee up in the bucket, working on a transformer directly across from the complainant's house.