

A Consumer Update from Mat Heck, Jr., Prosecuting Attorney



MAT HECK, Jr.
Montgomery County Prosecutor

The Grandparent Scam

The "Grandparent Scam" has several variations and has been around in one form or another for a long time. However, it's worth repeating because it's still going around and people continue to become victims.

Here's how it works: The victim, often a grandparent, gets an urgent call in the middle of the night from someone posing as their grandchild, or pretending to be calling on behalf of their grandchild. The caller claims there is some sort of trouble - for example a traffic accident or he/she is out of town and in need of some money wired immediately, or even in need of money to get out of jail. They also are careful to ask the victim to not notify their parents because they will get in trouble.



In a variation on this scam, the caller might pretend to be a police officer calling to get money wired and claims the grandchild gave him the grandparent's contact info.

By calling in the middle of the night, when one is not thinking clearly, many victims fall for this scam and wire the money - right into the hands of the crooks. This is a scam that works by playing on emotions and late-night confusion.

How do they get my information?

Personal information is easy to obtain today using the internet and various social media sites, such as Facebook. Another often used source of information is obituaries, which usually list the names of surviving family members and their relationships.

There are a number of ways you can protect yourself:

- Ignore the "don't call my parents" request. Call the grandchild's parents and verify they are where the caller claims.
- Try calling the grandchild directly.
- Ask the caller to verify a fact only know to the family, such as the name of a beloved pet

If you believe you have been the target of the grandparent scam, immediately contact the wire service and ask them to stop payment on your check. There is a chance you can recover your funds if the scammers have not yet picked up the cash.

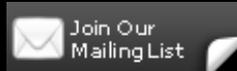
- Report the scam to the Federal Trade Commission at 1-877-382-4357 or at www.ftc.gov.
- Call your local police department and make a report as soon as possible.

Thieves are becoming more and more sophisticated. They know that playing on emotions is extremely effective because the victims are more apt to respond based on gut reaction and fear, rather than on logic and reason.

The above ALERT is part of the Montgomery County Prosecuting Attorney's initiative to help citizens become aware of ways they can avoid becoming a victim, or ways they can help stop criminal activity that may be occurring. Upon request, the office can provide presentations on crime prevention actions and activities to halt crime and increase the quality of life in our community.

If you would like additional information on the above ALERT, or would like additional information regarding our programs to assist consumers in general and/or seniors in particular, please contact Kimberly Oliver, Supervising Attorney, Adult Protection Unit, or Ward Barrentine, Supervising Attorney, Fraud and Economic Crimes Unit at 937-225-5757.

[VISIT OUR WEBSITE](#)



Montgomery County Prosecutor's Office
info@mcpo.com