Protect Yourself From Common Scams

A FIVE-MINUTE GUIDE FOR OLDER ADULTS, RETIREES, AND THEIR FAMILIES

10 Common Scams Targeting Older Adults

1. **Government impersonation**
   Someone poses as Social Security, Medicare, the IRS, or law enforcement.
2. **Bank or business impersonation**
   A caller or text claims suspicious activity at your bank, Amazon, or another familiar company.
3. **Investment scams**
   "Guaranteed" returns, fake platforms, cryptocurrency, or pressure to move retirement savings.
4. **Tech-support scams**
   A pop-up or caller claims your device was hacked and requests payment or remote access.
5. **Romance scams**
   Someone builds an online relationship, then requests money for an emergency or investment.
6. **Grandparent scams**
   A caller pretends to be a grandchild, attorney, or police officer dealing with an emergency.
7. **Sweepstakes and lottery scams**
   You are told you won a prize but must pay taxes or fees before receiving it.
8. **Medicare and health scams**
   Someone offers free equipment, testing, or benefits for Medicare information.
9. **Home-repair scams**
   An unsolicited contractor pressures you to approve urgent repairs or pay a large amount upfront.
10. **Fraud-recovery scams**
    Someone promises to recover money lost to fraud after another fee is paid.

Red Flags That Should Immediately Raise Concern

- You must act immediately.
- You are told to keep the situation secret.
- Your money must be moved to a "safe account."
- Payment is requested through gift cards, cryptocurrency, cash, gold, or wire transfer.
- Someone requests remote access to your computer or phone.
- You must pay money to receive a prize.
- An investment offers high returns with little or no risk.
- Your bank supposedly needs you to transfer money to protect it.
- The caller becomes threatening, angry, or refuses to let you hang up.
- You are discouraged from speaking with family, your bank, or a trusted professional.

REMEMBER

Caller ID, familiar logos, official-looking documents, and even a recognizable voice can be faked.

Helping Michigan families protect what they've worked a lifetime to build.

Recognizing and Responding to Fraud

EARLY ACTION CAN REDUCE LOSSES AND PROTECT THE PERSON YOU CARE ABOUT

Signs Someone May Already Be a Victim

- Unexplained withdrawals, transfers, or new credit-card charges
- Frequent purchases of gift cards or cryptocurrency
- Sudden secrecy about finances or online relationships
- Unusual fear, embarrassment, anxiety, or defensiveness
- Receiving excessive calls, texts, packages, or sweepstakes notices
- Missing bills or changes to account addresses and passwords
- A new “friend,” caregiver, or romantic interest influencing financial decisions
- Attempts to borrow money or unexpectedly access retirement accounts
- Being coached about what to tell family members or bank employees

What Family Members Should Do

- Stay calm and avoid blame or embarrassment.
- Listen carefully and document what happened.
- Stop further communication with the suspected scammer.
- Contact the financial institution immediately.
- Change passwords and enable two-factor authentication.
- Preserve messages, receipts, phone numbers, and records.
- Report the incident, even if no money was lost.

If Fraud Is Suspected

1. **Stop all payments and communication.**
2. **Call the institution using its official number.**
3. **Tell a trusted family member immediately.**

- Ask if a transfer can be stopped or reversed.
- Change affected passwords and account access.
- Contact local police if money or property was taken.
- Report at ReportFraud.ftc.gov or IC3.gov.
- For Social Security scams: SSA.gov/scam.
- Consider a fraud alert or credit freeze.

Five-Minute Safety Checklist

Keep this page near your phone or computer.

BEFORE SENDING MONEY OR PROVIDING INFORMATION, ASK:

- [ ] **Did I initiate this contact?**
- [ ] **Am I being pressured or frightened?**
- [ ] **Am I being told to keep it secret?**
- [ ] **Is an unusual payment method being requested?**
- [ ] **Have I independently verified the person or organization?**
- [ ] **Have I discussed it with someone I trust?**

WHEN IN DOUBT: STOP. HANG UP. VERIFY INDEPENDENTLY. ASK SOMEONE YOU TRUST.

MICHAEL ZOELLNER | DIRECTOR OF INSURANCE
Z Advisory Innovations | (248) 886-8190
Zoe.ai.michael@gmail.com | zoellnerwholefinancial.com
Helping Michigan families protect what they've worked a lifetime to build.

Learn More About Michael and His Retirement Income Practice