

Grandparent Scams:

What is an emergency scam?

- Emergency scams, including variations called "grandparent scams", use urgency and the manipulation of emotions to extort money from victims. In these scams, fraudsters call seniors claiming to be a grandchild, family member, law enforcement officer or lawyer calling on behalf of their loved one.
- In 2022, CAFC saw a 40% increase in Grandparent Scams, and a total of \$530 million in losses from victims. It is estimated that only 5-10 per cent of victims report scams, and these numbers are actually much higher.
- Alberta reported over \$1.1 million in loss and is the second most impacted province by these types of scams.

What does a Grandparent scam look like?

- A scammer will say that the person's loved one was involved in an emergency situation of some kind. Common situations are a collision, law enforcement trouble, legal issues, and being sick or injured. They demand the senior provide payment immediately for supposed bail, legal fees, fines or other amounts "owed" to stop the family member from going to jail or to get them released from custody.
- The fraudsters isolate the victims by informing them that there is a court-imposed gag order, and they're forbidden from discussing the matter. The victims are directed to attend their financial institution to withdraw the requested amount in cash. The fraudsters will then send someone to pick it up from the victim's home or have the victim send the money via courier services. There have also been reports of victims paying with cryptocurrency.

How can I protect myself or ones I love?

- The scammer will prey on your emotions and caring nature, and use high-pressure tactics to scare you into making hasty decisions. **Ask yourself if this family member would pressure you like this?**
- Scammers can be very convincing. They may use social media to learn enough about you or your family to impersonate them. **Verify who you're talking with by asking questions only they could possibly know.**
- **Educate friends and family.** Tell them the warning signs of grandparents scam.

Should I report it?

Yes! Even if no money changes hands, please call the Red Deer RCMP's non-emergency line at 403-406-2200 to report the call. You should also report it to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre (CAFC) at 1-888-495-8501.