

Top Senior Scams

Seniors are under attack in the United States from criminals – domestic and foreign – who devise something new every day in an attempt to steal their treasure, whether it's money, their IDs or property, crime prevention officials say.

According to the National Association of Triads, the top six scams involving seniors are:



Telemarketing that includes internet, phones and mail.

Scammers might send out an email on bank letterhead and say there is a problem with the account and the senior needs to update information, password and account number.



Fake charities.

There's one where you get a call from a charity saying they are supporting a reputable organization and ask you to make a donation. What they don't tell you is that they are not authorized to be fundraising for that organization. While as little as 3 percent will go to that organization, 97 percent may stay in the scammer's pocket.



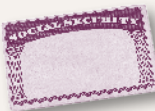
Sweepstakes.

Many times people will get an official-looking check. The account number is fraudulent, but the routing number is correct. The bank reads it as a valid check. What the sweepstakes will tell a senior is, "Cash the check, you get the bulk of the money and send \$5,000 to us for processing." Fifteen days later, that check bounces and the senior is liable for that \$5,000. Some even come looking like official IRS refunds with the message: "Here's your check, but you need to pay the late fees."



Health-care fraud.

It's a growing "industry" and frequently ignored. With health care, there can be misuse of the medical card. Scammers then fabricate the need for treatment and get paid for it. For instance, scammers can find out a senior is diabetic, call him up and say, "Give us your Medicare card number, and we can send your supplies through the mail." Or they can obtain free treatment by assuming that older adult's identity.



Identity theft.

A senior gets the call: "We need to verify your account number; give us the last four digits of your Social Security number." They can match that with the phone number, last place of employment, home address, and once they have put that package together, take a loan out on the home, open credit cards, go to big-box stores and open an account, or get a \$5,000 line of credit. A senior gets the bill, and they get the goods.



Financial exploitation, including online investment and securities fraud.

Scammers will sell seniors long-term securities or stock. They have no problems selling a woman in her 80s a certificate that doesn't mature for 20 or 25 years. They're relying on her inability to understand the fine print. Then if she needs the money, she must break the bond and pay the penalties. Scammers make a commission.



Contact local law enforcement if you think someone has scammed your senior or might be trying to do so. For more about protecting your seniors from scammers, contact your [local Home Instead Senior Care® office](#), or visit ProtectSeniorsFromFraud.com.

