



This Grandparents Day, Share Your Scam Knowledge

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MADISON – On Grandparents Day (September 10th), the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) asks Wisconsin families to talk with their older relatives about how to spot scams and identity theft risks and to take steps to stay protected from fraudsters.

“It is an unfortunate reality that many scammers prey on seniors,” said Frank Frassetto, Division Administrator for Trade and Consumer Protection. “While consumers in all age groups fall for the traps set by con artists, seniors can be particularly vulnerable.”

The best place to start a conversation with older relatives is by sharing a copy of DATCP’s Senior Guide. This free booklet helps seniors navigate tricky consumer issues and protect themselves from scams and identity theft. The Senior Guide is available on the [DATCP website](http://datcp.wisconsin.gov) or can be ordered by calling DATCP’s Consumer Protection Hotline (800-422-7128).

Many common scams that target seniors are outlined in the guide, including:

- Grandparent scams (or “family emergency” scams) – a scammer falsely claims that a family member is in trouble and requests money. The scammers often claim to be the grandchild in need of help.
- Tech support scams – a “computer technician” says you have a computer virus that they can repair for payment and remote access to your computer.
- Timeshare resale fraud – someone claims that they have a buyer for your timeshare. After signing a phony “sales contract,” the victim is continuously asked for payments for document fees and other expenses.
- IRS/U.S. Treasury scams – a fake “federal agent” claims you owe back taxes and demands immediate payment.
- Medical alert/equipment fraud – scammers place robocalls to potential victims pitching “free” medical equipment and personal emergency alert systems. The items are often of questionable quality and are tied to recurring fees.

“Many scams and identity theft traps have similar themes with different narratives in their ploys,” said Frassetto. “Knowing the underlying tricks can protect a senior from a wide range of rip-offs.”

Start a conversation with older relatives by reviewing these simple tips:

- Never wire money to someone you don’t know. Wire transfers are like cash – the chance for recovery is slim to none.
- Don’t trust your caller ID. Scammers “spoof” the information to appear as a local number.
- Never engage with an unsolicited sales robocall. Taking any action may cause you to get additional calls. Create an exit strategy to get off the phone.
- Never provide your bank or credit card account numbers on an unsolicited call.
- Always check with a family member before you act on a high pressure sales pitch.

For more information about senior scams or other fraudulent activities targeting older citizens, visit the Consumer Protection Bureau at <http://datcp.wi.gov>, send an e-mail to datcp hotline@wisconsin.gov or call the Consumer Protection Hotline.

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