



CANADIAN ANTI-FRAUD CENTRE BULLETIN

Top Frauds Affecting Seniors

2020-09-28

FRAUD: RECOGNIZE, REJECT, REPORT

Since it has been six months since March – Fraud Prevention Month, the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre would like to remind the public of the top fraud types affecting seniors (60+):

Extortion: Extortion happens when someone unlawfully obtains money, property or services from a person, entity or institution through coercion. *SIN Scam:* Consumers are receiving recorded messages about their Social Insurance Number (SIN) being linked to fraudulent or criminal activity. The fraudsters are claiming to be different federal government agencies. There may be threats of an arrest warrant or imprisonment, if the consumer does not cooperate with the fraudster's demands. They may request personal information (SIN, DOB, address etc.) or request that consumers empty their bank accounts and deposit the funds to be cleared from illegal activity and returned once their investigation is complete.

Romance: Fraudsters use every type of dating or social networking site available to contact their victims. Their accounts are created using photos stolen from legitimate people. Their background stories often mimic the victim's and they are often in the military, work overseas, or are successful business people. They quickly profess their love to gain their victims' trust, affection, and money. This type of fraud relies heavily on victim emotions and may last for months, years, or until the victim has nothing left to give. The fraudsters will always run into trouble and are unable to refund their victims; however, they will continue to make empty promises and ask for more money.

Service: These frauds often involve offers for telecommunications, internet, finance, medical, and energy services. In addition, extended warranties, insurance and sales services may also fall under this category.

Bank Investigator: Fraudsters call consumers claiming to be a financial institution or a major credit card provider. To prove the legitimacy of the call, the fraudsters often ask the consumer to end the call and immediately call the number on the back of their card. The fraudsters then inform the consumer that they are investigating unauthorized activity on their account. The fraudsters ask the consumer to help them catch the criminal. By providing remote access to their device, the fraudsters will claim to put money into the victim's account so that they can send *bait money*. Unfortunately, the funds seen going into the victim's account are coming from their other accounts and the money being sent is going directly to the fraudsters.

Prize: Consumers are informed that they are the winner of a large lottery or sweepstake even though they have never purchased a ticket or entered to win. Prior to receiving any winnings, the victim will be asked to pay a number of upfront fees. No winnings are ever received.

Emergency: Any phone call or email from someone claiming to be a friend or family member who is in some kind of trouble and requires money immediately.



Royal Canadian Mounted Police Gendarmerie royale du Canada



Competition Bureau Canada Bureau de la concurrence Canada



Ontario Provincial Police

Canada

How to protect yourself

- Never assume that the phone numbers appearing on your call display are accurate.
- No government agency will contact you and tell you that your SIN is blocked or suspended, nor will they threaten you with legal action.
- No government or law enforcement agency will demand an immediate payment or to submit all of your money for investigation.
- No government or law enforcement agency will request payment by Bitcoin, a money service business, or gift cards (ie. iTunes, Google Play, Steam).
- How to recognize the CRA fraud: <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/corporate/security/protect-yourself-against-fraud.html>
- Beware of individuals quickly professing their love for you.
- Beware of individuals who claim to be wealthy, but need to borrow money.
- When trying meet in-person, be suspicious if they always provide you with reasons to cancel.
- Never send intimate photos or video of yourself as they may be used to blackmail you.
- Never accept or send money to a third party under any circumstances.
- Never allow an individual to remotely access your computer.
- Verify any incoming calls with your credit card company by calling the number on the back of the card. Be sure to end the original call and wait a few minutes before dialing.
- Never provide any personal or financial information over the telephone.
- Only a credit card company can adjust the interest rate on their own product.
- Research all companies and contractors offering services before hiring them.
- If you end a call on a landline phone and immediately dial another call, the original call may not be completely disconnected. Wait a few minutes or use another phone to complete another call.
- Financial institutions will never ask for assistance from the public for internal investigations.
- The only way to participate in any foreign lottery is to go to the country of origin and purchase a ticket. A ticket cannot be purchased on your behalf.
- In Canada, if you win a lottery, you are not required to pay any fees or taxes in advance.
- Confirm with other relatives the whereabouts of the family member or friend.
- Learn [more tips and tricks for protecting yourself](#).

If you think you or someone you know has been a victim of fraud, please contact the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre at 1-888-495-8501 or report online at www.antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca.