

SUNRISE SENIOR LIVING

Overview: Scams Targeting Seniors

NOVEMBER 12, 2024



Elder Fraud and Scams

- Elder fraud is a growing problem across the nation. Last year, more than 101,000 Americans aged 60-plus were defrauded out of **\$3.4 billion** through an ever-growing variety of scams. According to the FBI, that number included **397 Mainers who filed fraud complaints last year for losses totaling more than \$7.1 million**, and many others go unreported. While some scams can have negligible losses, recent sophisticated scams have robbed victims of their life savings.
- With the elderly population growing and seniors racking up more than **\$3 billion in losses annually**, elder fraud has remained a growing problem.



Types of Scams Targeting Seniors

1. Romance Scams
2. Tech Support Scams
3. The Grandparent Scam
4. Government Impersonation Scams
5. Sweepstakes/Lottery Scams
6. Home Repair Scams
7. TV/Radio Scams
8. Family/Caregiver Scams



Romance Scams

Scammers targeting elder citizens may employ one or more of the following types of schemes:

- **Romance scam**: Criminals pose as interested romantic partners on social media or dating websites to capitalize on their elderly victims' desire to find companions.
 - Targeted groups – Women, elderly, those who recently lost a spouse.
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vthPmLORVrM>

Tech Support Scams

- Criminals pose as technology support representatives and offer to fix non-existent computer issues. The scammers gain remote access to victims' devices and sensitive information.
- Between January and June 2023, 19,000 complaints related to tech support scams were submitted to the FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3), with estimated victim losses of over **\$542 million**. **Almost 50% of the victims reported to IC3 were over 60 years-old, comprising 66% of the total losses.** As of August 2023, losses have already exceeded those in 2022 by 40%.



Grandparent Scam

- **Grandparent scam:** A type of confidence scam where criminals pose as a relative—usually a child or grandchild—claiming to be in immediate financial need.

FBI Press Release

Grandparent Scammer Sentenced to Federal Prison

Thursday, February 29, 2024

District of Rhode Island

PROVIDENCE, RI –

“Jean Richard Audate, 38, was sentenced on Wednesday by U.S. District Court Judge William E. Smith to 30 months of incarceration to be followed by three years of federal supervised release. He was also ordered to pay a total of **\$867,149** to victims of the scam.”



Government Impersonation Scam

- **Government impersonation scam:** Criminals pose as government employees and threaten to arrest or prosecute victims unless they agree to provide funds or other payments.

- <https://vimeo.com/377637921>



Sweepstakes or Lottery Scams



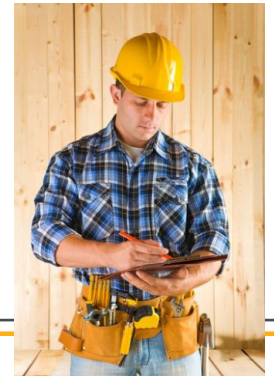
- **Sweepstakes/charity/lottery scam:** Criminals claim to work for legitimate charitable organizations to gain victims' trust. Or they claim their targets have won a foreign lottery or sweepstake, which they can collect for a "fee."

The sweepstakes scam is one many people are familiar with. Here, scammers call an older adult to tell them they've won a lottery or prize of some kind. If they want to claim their winnings, the older adult must send money, cash, or gift cards up front—sometimes thousands of dollars' worth—to cover supposed taxes and processing fees. Scammers may impersonate well-known sweepstakes organizations (like Publishers Clearing House) to build trust among their targets. Of course, no prize is ever delivered. Sometimes, fraudsters are able to convince the older adult to send even more money by telling them their winnings will arrive soon. Many continue to call people for months and even years after defrauding them out of an initial sum of money.



Home Repair Scams

- **Home repair scam:** Criminals appear in person and charge homeowners in advance for home improvement services that they never provide.
- **Here's how they work:**
- Someone knocks on your door or calls you. They say they can fix your leaky roof, put in new windows, or install the latest energy-efficient solar panels. They might find you after a flood, windstorm, or other natural disaster. They pressure you to act quickly and might ask you to pay in cash or offer to get you financing.
- But here's what happens next: they run off with your money and never make the repairs. Or they do shoddy repairs that make things worse. Maybe they got you to sign a bad financing agreement that puts your house at risk.



TV/Radio Scams

- **TV/radio scam:** Criminals target potential victims using illegitimate advertisements about legitimate services, such as **reverse mortgages** or **credit repair**.
- Better Business Bureau warns of pop-up scams targeting **smart TVs**



Family/Caregiver Scams

- **Family/caregiver scam:** Relatives or acquaintances of the elderly victims take advantage of them or otherwise get their money.
- One common form of elder abuse is financial exploitation, which is estimated to cause **\$28.3 billion in losses each year.**

Theft	Fraud	Real Estate	Contractor	Lottery Scams
Involves assets taken without knowledge, consent or authorization; may include taking of cash, valuables, medications other personal property.	Involves acts of dishonestly by persons entrusted to manage assets but appropriate assets for unintended uses; may include falsification of records, forgeries, unauthorized check-writing, and Ponzi-type financial schemes.	Involves unauthorized sales, transfers or changes to property title(s); may include unauthorized or invalid changes to estate documents.	Includes building contractors or handymen who receive payment(s) for building repairs, but fail to initiate or complete project; may include invalid liens by contractors	Involves payments (or transfer of funds) to collect unclaimed property or "prizes" from lotteries or sweepstakes.

Source: www.napsa-now.org



How to Protect Your Residents

- Be alert
- Secure all personal documents in the home.
- Encourage them to register on the do not call list at www.donotcall.gov
- Direct Marketing Association's Do Not Mail List -You can also remove yourself from mailing lists by sending your name, address, telephone number, and your signature to:

Mail Preference Service

Direct Marketing Association (DMA)
PO Box 0914
Farmingdale, NY 11735-9014



- Educate residents to be skeptical, ask questions.
- For smartphones, set up contacts with names on them instead of numbers, for example “pharmacy,” “neighbor,” “doctor,” etc.
- The website of CTIA, a trade association that represents the U.S. wireless industry, has lists of apps for Android and Apple devices that block robocalls and spam texts.
- **Help them freeze their credit report.** A [freeze](#) prevents anyone from opening a credit account in their name; they can quickly unfreeze it if they do need someone to access it — to get a loan approved, for instance. It is all FREE.
- Encourage residents to report scams.

SOURCES:

www.fbi.gov

www.ftc.gov

www.maine.gov/ag

www.aarp.com

www.ncoa.org

www.napsa-now.org