



FRAUDS AND SCAMS

DEFINITIONS:

Both terms refer to a dishonest act or a misrepresentation for obtaining goods or money. **Fraud** is the correct term for the *criminal* offence.

WHY ARE SENIORS VULNERABLE?

- Tend to be more trusting
- Feel impolite to hang up or close the door on someone
- Can be uncomfortable dealing with personal finances
- May be isolated and glad to talk to someone

WARNING SIGNS

- The deal seems too good to be true.
- Focus on wording such as: Act Now or Miss Out! No Risk!
- Attempts are made to get personal or financial information.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF GENERALLY

- Use caller "ID" to screen calls.
- Give out your phone number only to somebody you trust.
- Take time before you rush to donate money.
- Do not carry important papers in your briefcase, pockets or purse.
- Choose your pin numbers carefully. Avoid using:
 - your birthdate
 - phone number
 - pet's name
 - social insurance number

IDENTITY SCAM

An Identify thief may

- Steal your purse or wallet
- Dumpster dive in your trash
- Break into your home
- Solicit your information over the phone

When someone steals your identity, they have access to:

- Cell phone contacts
- Chequing accounts
- Credit cards
- Driver's License
- Loans and lines of credit
- Overdraft protection
- Passport



With this information, they can commit crimes in your name.

Precautions

- Use passwords that are not easy to figure out.
- When you lose a card, let the card company know immediately.
- Sign credit and debit cards when you get them.
- Install fire walls on your computer.
- Keep your purse and wallet close to you and within sight.
- Keep important documents safe.
- Shred papers with your ID on them.

THE TOP TEN FRAUDS AGAINST SENIORS

1 Telephone Frauds & Scams

Variation #1: The Grandparent Scam

- Relatives asking for emergency money. They might say, *"Hi, this is your favorite grandson or niece. I need you to send me money."*
- Any request to wire or send money should immediately raise a red flag.

Variation #2: Bogus bank Inspector

- You are asked to withdraw a large amount of cash to use to catch a bad person.



Protect yourself!

- Never give personal information over the phone.
- If you have caller ID and do not recognize the number, let it go to voice mail.

#2 Financial Fraud

Variation #1: Romance Scams

- Scammers steal photos and use dating sites, social media or phone calls to lure potential victims into sending money for various reasons.
- They will claim to be working abroad.
- Eventually they will want to meet.
- It is at this time that they will inform the victim that they cannot afford to travel and will ask for money to cover travel costs.

Variation #2: Buying and Selling Cheque Overpayment Scam

- You, the seller, get a cheque from the "purchaser" in excess of the amount owed.
- You are asked to deposit the cheque and send the excess funds back to the purchaser.

Protect yourself

- When selling "stuff", never let the buyer pay more by cheque, than the agreed price.
 - Take your time before you buy; do not be rushed into a decision.
 - Be careful when disposing of boxes (e.g. stereo, TV, computer). Cut and fold them so thieves are not alerted to your new items.
- Be careful about what you sign!
- Keep a record of all your bank account and credit card information in a safe location.

#3 Internet Scams

Variation #1: You receive an email

- Scammers create email messages and web pages that mimic trusted business & government agencies and/or send emails to "fish" for passwords and financial data.

Variation #2: Spear phishing

- Spear-phisher knows your name and may write, "Hi Bob:" instead of, "Dear Sir:"

Protect yourself!

- Keep secrets secret and limit what information you put on social media.
- Change passwords often and avoid using variations of just one password.
- When you get notice to update your software, do it.

Variation #3: Travel Scams

You win a free vacation!

- You complete a prize form at an event.
- You are asked for credit card, personal information or cash to hold the deal.



Protect yourself!

- Do not let anyone pressure you into immediate agreement.
- In BC, if you have signed up for a travel club or holiday certificate, you have 10 days to cancel.

#4 Fake Lotteries & Sweepstakes

You're a WINNER!!!!

– all you have to do is:

- Pay a shipping fee and taxes
- Buy something
- Give your credit card number
- Attend a presentation

Protect yourself!

- Do not buy lottery tickets through telephone solicitation.

#5 Counterfeit Prescription Drugs

- Seniors cannot afford medications. Many search the Internet to find cheaper drugs.
- Fraudsters set up fake online websites to cater to this need.

Protect yourself!

- If you use online pharmacies, use only the ones that have a storefront as well. For example, use London Drugs online or Pharmasave online.

#6 Charity Cheaters

Callers claim to represent charities to help pay for disaster recovery or to provide aid for victims of a disaster.

- Beware of fake web sites, especially after a disaster.

Protect yourself!

- If someone wants a donation by phone, request that they send you the information by mail, not by email, and do not give credit card information.

#7 Shady Contractors

Variation #1: Home Repair Rip-offs

Fraudulent contractors may

- knock on your door and offer a special price because...

- Conduct a free inspection and then suggest you need MAJOR repairs (e.g. due to radon, termites, etc.).
- do only part of the work and then refuse to continue - unless you pay more.



If you are a victim of fraud, REPORT it to ensure others are not victimized – even if you are.

Variation #2: Public Utility Imposters

- Two people arrive at your door claiming to be from a public utility company inspection service.

Protect yourself!

- Ask for ID. Phone police if no ID.
- Ask to see their business license and insurance coverage.
- Check references.
- Check with the Better Business Bureau.

#8 Anti-aging Scams

- Be wary if a product claims to reduce aging and/or make you feel or look younger.

Protect yourself!

- Remember, there is no way to reverse aging.

#9 Funeral & Cremation Scams

- Scammers read obituaries and take advantage of the grieving survivor by claiming the deceased owes an outstanding debt, and then extorts money to settle the false claim.

Protect yourself!

- Put your arrangements in writing and keep this with your will so your loved ones know your wishes.

#10 Income Tax Scams

- Scammers, who pose as CRA agents, will use emails, phone calls and regular mail, and even text messages. Often the phone calls seem urgent and the scammers will use aggressive language or threats to scare people.

Protect yourself!

- Do not respond; report the call to the police.

Identity Theft

What an identity thief wants is access to your full name, address, birthdate, SIN, PINs, mother's maiden name, credit card/bank account

Variation #1 Paper Chase

- The thief obtains your print mail, including financial statements or other documents that include personal identification information.

Variation # 2 Skimming

- The thief obtains data from the magnetic stripe on a credit card.
- The thief takes a photo of a card and the data is then transferred to a new blank card.

Identity Theft: Protect yourself

- Do not carry unnecessary documents in your purse or briefcase.
- Do not leave your purse in a shopping cart, hanging over a chair, or on the floor.
- Review financial statements carefully each month.
- Tear or shred receipts, financial statements and similar documents. Do not just throw them out.
- Memorize PINs.
- Shield PIN entry.
- Report anything that does not seem right with ATM machine.
- Verify all transactions.

RESOURCES

- **2-1-1** Provides information about community services in Metro Vancouver, Fraser Valley and Squamish/Lillooet
- BC Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support
604-437-1940 or 1-866-437-1940
- Better Business Bureau of BC 604-682-2711 www.mainlandbc.bbb.org
- Canadian Antifraud Centre
1-888-495-8501
www.antifraudcentre.ca
- Canada Revenue Agency 1-800-267-2384 www.cra-arc.ca/charities
- Credit Counselling Society of BC 1-888-527-8999
www.ccsbc.org/help.shtml

To get your credit report

- Equifax Canada Inc. 1-800-465-7166
www.equifax.ca
- TransUnion Canada 1-800-663-9980
www.transunion.ca
- Dial-A-Law 604-687-4680 or 1-800-565-5297 www.dialalaw.org
- Lawyer Referral Service 604-687-3221 or 1-800-663-1919
- Legal Services Society
604-408-2172 or 1-866-577-2525
- Phone Busters 1-888-495-8501
www.phonebusters.com
- RCMP Victim Services: Call your local detachment or 1-800-563-0808
- ScamBusters: www.scambusters.org

REPORTING

- Gather all documents and receipts.
- Contact your local police agency.
- Contact the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre at: 1-888-495-8501

FRAUD

Recognize it!

Report it!

Stop it!



