

NEWS RELEASE

Released by: Gordon J. MacDonald, Attorney General

Subject: Attorney General's Scam Alert: Scammers Employing New Tactics in Perpetrating the Grandparent Scam

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Concord, NH -- Attorney General Gordon J. MacDonald issues a scam alert for New Hampshire residents, especially its older adult population, concerning new and concerning tactics being employed by scammers in perpetrating the "Grandparent Scam."

In a "Grandparent Scam," a scammer calls or e-mails a victim posing as one of the victim's relatives, typically a grandchild or child. The scammer posing as the relative then claims to be in trouble, often saying he or she has been arrested by law enforcement in another state or country. The scammer may also pose as a member of law enforcement and claim to have arrested or detained the victim's relative. The scammer will instruct the victim to not tell anyone, often saying the victim is under a "legal gag order" to not speak about the incident.

In the past, these scammers would then seek to swindle money from the victims by requesting that the victim wire funds to a bank account or otherwise transfer funds electronically. However, New Hampshire residents have recently reported these scammers have arranged for the in-person pick-up of money or other valuable goods directly from the victim's home. This represents a new and dangerous threat to New Hampshire residents.

The Attorney General reminds New Hampshire residents that legitimate law enforcement officials will *never*:

- Issue a "gag order" regarding the release of a relative over the telephone or by e-mail;
- Demand immediate payment over the telephone or by e-mail by wire transfer or in-person payment of cash or other valuables (such as gold) in exchange for the release of a relative; or
- Ask for your personal information in exchange for the release of a relative.

The Attorney General urges New Hampshire residents to be vigilant. Anyone receiving one of these calls should take the following steps:

- Do not engage with the caller;
- Hang up immediately;
- Do not provide money or personal information, including home address;
- Contact your local police department immediately, especially if you have lost money or other valuables, or made arrangements for the pick-up of money or valuables from your own home; and
- Report the scam to the Office of the Attorney General – Consumer Protection Hotline:
1-888-468-4454
E-mail: Doj-CPB@doj.nh.gov
www.doj.nh.gov/consumer/complaints

Be aware that scammers are able to “ghost” or utilize what appear to be trusted telephone numbers or may utilize similar e-mail addresses to those belonging to relatives. The scammers are also often able to supply personal information about the relative, which the scammer has obtained through the internet. As a result, even if it appears that the telephone number or e-mail address is familiar or the caller provides some information you know to be true, the Attorney General’s Office advises all to be cautious and aware of the potential that it may still be a scam call.

Anyone with knowledge that a vulnerable adult has been scammed or financially exploited should also contact the New Hampshire Bureau of Elderly and Adult Services, at 1-800-949-0470.

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