

PROTECTING YOUR FINANCES

It is becoming easier and easier for scammers to trick consumers into giving sensitive information and money to strangers. Scam attempts can come from a phone call, direct mailer, text message, e-mail or even someone you've invited into your home. Seniors are prime targets for scams because they are often trusting and isolated. Use the simple tips below to protect yourself from fraudsters and share them with your friends and family:

Be on Guard

- **Safeguard personal information.** Don't give out personal, financial or health information to people you do not know. This includes your social security number, ATM or credit card number. Keep these items in a secure place.
- **Monitor your monthly statements.** Monitoring credit reports, personal/benefits statements and financial accounts are great methods to detect theft.
- **My Social Security.** Visit www.ssa.gov/myaccount to keep track of your social security benefits. You can review benefit and personal information and lookout for any signs of identity theft.

Shop Smart

- **Research a business.** Thinking of doing business with a company you've never heard of? Take the time to research them. Call us at 1-800-922-1594 to see if we have any complaints against the business you are interested in. Also, a quick internet search can be quite revealing.
- **Take Your Time.** Avoid high pressure sales tactics. If it is a reputable company, the service will be there tomorrow.
- **Read the contract.** It may seem obvious, but you must read the entire contract. Verbal contracts are difficult to prove. Make sure you have a written contract, all terms are included and you fully understand them. Ask questions or consult with someone you trust before you sign. Make sure you get a copy of the completed contract.
- **No guarantees.** Be suspicious of promises that sound too good to be true. Make sure you understand the services being offered and the time frame in which they will be provided.
- **Cancellation policies.** Verify the cancellation policy. What would you need to do to opt out? Are there any fees associated with cancelling?



**Think you gave your
information to a
scammer?**

Don't worry! SCDCA's Identity
Theft Unit can help! **Contact
them today at
1- 800-922-1594**

Spot a Scam

Scammers are always on the prowl, usually with the same ploys they've been using for years. Cold callers requesting payments via wire transfer or prepaid debit card and asking to "verify" sensitive information are all scam red flags. If you are contacted by someone asking for these things, steer clear. Below are some common ruses fraudsters might use to pull the wool over your eyes.



SCAM ALERT



- **Dating Scams.** Scammers sometimes use online dating sites to meet potential victims. If someone begins asking you for expensive gifts and money in the name of love, think twice.
- **Work-from-Home Scams.** Many seniors are looking to supplement a fixed income. From envelope stuffing to website creation to secret shopping, do your research before signing up.
- **Grandparent Scam.** You get a call from someone who sounds like your grandchild in distress! These scammers will claim they are in big trouble and only **you** can help. Anyone who cold calls you asking for money and your secrecy is probably a scammer.

Have a Consumer Problem?

You can file a complaint and we'll see what we can do. Don't forget to check out our Online Complaint System. This new system allows you to file your complaint online, even your supporting documents. You can also check on how many consumer complaints a business has by using the Public Search Tool. Just go to www.consumer.sc.gov and click FILE A COMPLAINT or SEARCH COMPLAINTS.

*SCDCA aims to protect consumers from inequities in the marketplace through advocacy, complaint mediation, enforcement and education.
To file a complaint or for information on consumer issues, visit www.consumer.sc.gov or call toll-free, 1-800-922-1594*