



HUMBOLDT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

William F. Honsal, Sheriff

Media Release

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Subject: Grandparent Scam

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office has received information about another phone scam targeting local residents. This scam targets older Humboldt County residents, with the scammer pretending to be the victim's grandchild.

According to one local resident who received a call from these scammers, the caller claimed to be the resident's grandson and said he was traveling overseas, had gotten into a car accident and couldn't get back home until his rental car damages were covered. The scammer asked the resident to wire nearly \$5,000 through Western Union to cover the costs. But when the resident asked the caller to spell his grandson's middle name, the scammer hung up.

Grandparent scam situations vary in context but they all contain the same components: the caller says there's been some type of emergency (accident, arrest, assault, etc.) and asks you to send money immediately. The scammer might pose as a grandchild or may identify themselves as a lawyer or law enforcement official on behalf of a relative.

In some cases, the scammer might not have the name of the victim's relative and waits for the victim to ask if the scammer is their grandchild, i.e. "John, is that you?" Some scammers may have a lot of personal information, know the names of your relatives and may sound convincing.

If you get a call or an email from someone claiming to know you and asking for help, the best way to determine if it is a scam is to pause, tell the scammer you will need to contact another family member first and hang up. Then, contact the person who they claim to be directly. If you can't reach that person, contact someone else- a friend or relative of the person. Don't send money unless you're sure it's a real person you know.

If you receive a call or email from one of these scammers, report it to your local law enforcement and the Federal Trade Commission.