

Scams Targeting Seniors

Prizes and Sweepstakes

The victim is required to send money for taxes, shipping, processing fees, etc. The prize is usually never delivered

Investments

The elderly are persuaded to invest in precious gems, real estate, annuities, stocks and bonds. The elderly are promised extremely high rates of return. The investments are usually fake gems, uninhabitable property and either unprofitable or nonexistent companies.

Charity Contributions

By playing on compassion criminals ask for money for nonexistent charities and church organizations.

Home and Automobile Repairs

People may recommend home or car repairs that are not needed. When doing home repairs, the offender will ask for payment in advance and will not do any work at all, only do some of it, or do it so badly, the work has to be redone,

Loans and Mortgages

some lenders will provide loans with astronomical interest rates, hidden fees, and pay schedules that the elderly person can not pay. Many seniors lose their homes, which have been used as collateral.

Health, funeral, and Life Insurance

Some salespeople sell policies to elderly people that duplicate the coverage they already have, don't provide the coverage the salesperson has said it would, or are completely fake.

Health Remedies

Offenders market "miracle cures" that are completely useless.

Travel

Some low cost packages cost far more than market rates, have horrible accommodation, and do not provide the services that the senior paid for.

Confidence Games

The offender usually pretends to be someone trustworthy, usually someone in a position of authority, who tells the senior a story to get the victim to give them cash, then disappears.

Telemarketing

Telemarketers call people at home using high pressure sales pitches to get money for fraudulent investments, travel packages, charities, insurance policies, and sweepstakes.

Mail

Fraudulent sweepstakes or prize operations usually send out their information to a large audience. These fraudulent sweepstakes usually ask for a small fee from the recipient.

Face-to-face contact

Some scams involve two people. One person will offer a product or service that will enable them to enter the home. While one person distracts the victim, the partner will burglarize the home.

Elements of a Successful Scam

- They gain the trust and confidence of their victims.
- They create the impression that the senior is lucky or has been chosen to receive a special offer.
- They encourage their victims to make an immediate commitment, which doesn't allow the victim to research the offer or consult with anyone.
- They tell the victims that because it is for a very select group to not discuss the transaction with anyone.

Warning Signs of Fraudulent Offers

- A Promise that you can win, make, or borrow money easily.
- A demand that you act immediately or else miss out on a great opportunity.
- A refusal to send you written information before you agree to buy or donate.
- An attempt to scare you into buying something.
- An insistence that you wire money or have a courier pick up your payment.
- A refusal to stop calling after you have asked not to be called again.

News Release - OCTOBER 4, 2005
Lottery Scam Targets Elderly

Salt Lake City Police Department would like to warn the public of a scam that has been targeting the elderly population of Salt Lake City, as well as nationally.

Salt Lake City detectives have investigated several scams in which the victim received a letter stating that they have won a Canadian lottery for \$450,000.00. Enclosed in the letter is a check for \$4,690.48 to the victim. The letter states that the check is an 'advance' of money to cover documents/insurance fees involved in the winnings. The victim is then asked to deposit this check into their account and send a cashiers check (in the amount of \$4,690.48) back to the 'lottery'. By the time it is discovered that the 'advance' check is fraudulent, the victim has already lost their money.

Detectives are receiving approximately 10-12 calls a week from victims of this scam, and all the victims have been elderly.

If you receive a letter that states that you have won a sweepstakes or lottery, please check out the source thoroughly and do not send any money to them. You will not win a sweepstakes that you did not enter.

[Click here to see an actual notification letter of winnings and the check sent to the victim.](#)

(This is a pdf file - you will need Adobe Acrobat Reader to view this file)

[Click here to download free Adobe Acrobat Reader](#)

[\(close window\)](#)



LOTTERY TICKET

This certifies that your name entered in
GIG-GAMES Lottery 2005, Draw and won.
Aussie-Gaming Event License #786245

The following two
Ticket numbers have
been entered into the
draw in your name

689457	0
689469	2

DEAR: 

*Early Bird Draw
Sept7th, 2005*

This is to inform you the release of the long awaited **GIG-GAMES** Lottery results, which was held on **September 7th, 2005**

Your name attached to the ticket number **689457-0** was the lucky ticket that consequently won a prize in our division. Your ticket has therefore been approved for a lump sum pay of USD **\$450,000.00** (Four Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars) in cash credited to file Ref No. **LM-56435**. This is from a total cash prize of \$1,000,000.00 shared among the 3 (three) international winners in this category. **CONGRATULATIONS.**

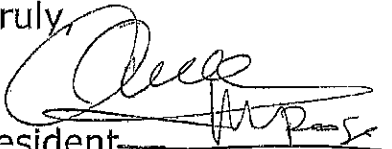
We ask that you keep this award top secret from public notice until your claim has been processed and your funds remitted to you, as this is part of our security protocol to avoid double claiming or unwarranted taking advantage by participants.

Since we do not deal directly with international participants all correspondence has been forwarded to our North American Agency. To begin your claim, please contact **ROBERT WHITE** of Prize Paying Department at **1 778 882 6991** for activation, processing and remittance of your prize to a designated account of your choice. Note that all prizes must be claimed not later than **October 5TH, 2005**

Note; we have enclosed a check for amount of **\$4690.48** to help you cover **Documentations and Insurance Fees** involved in your winning. In order to avoid unnecessary delay and complications, please remember to quote your reference and ticket numbers in your correspondence with your agent. Furthermore, shall there be any change of address, please inform your claim agent as soon as possible.

Please call us as soon as you receive this notice and once again **Congratulations.**

Yours truly



Vise President,
ROSE BLAKE (Prize Paying Department).

Elder Abuse Awareness Kit

Issues Facing Vulnerable Adults

Fraud and Exploitation and How to Avoid Them

Fraud by Friends and Family--new "best friends"; thieving "caregivers"; religious con-artists; financial abuse by family members. This is exploitation and should be reported to Adult Protective Service.

Report instances of fraud as described below to the appropriate Attorney General's office in your State or contact your APS office for the appropriate referral.

Home Equity Fraud--Homeowners may be tricked into signing over the deeds to their homes. Often this scam is done by a person pretending to be a repairman or someone offering another service. The elderly person signs a contract believing it to be for roof repair, for example, and does not read it carefully enough to realize that it is a deed to their own home.

How to Avoid Home Equity Fraud--Make sure the contractors you hire are licensed, bonded, and insured; hire only attorneys with malpractice insurance; keep current with property tax bills; sign a grant deed with an attorney present; have a reputable attorney or trusted people examine documents before you sign them; don't use your home as collateral; get several estimates from contractors and check their references; contact the Better Business Bureau; read the fine print; check with your city or bank for home repair financing programs.

Telemarketing Fraud--Some examples of telemarketing schemes which target elders are the "You Are A Winner!" pitch, which misleads victims with a non-existent prize in order to get them to buy something; offers to "get your stolen money back for you"; great loans or "fixing" bad credit; fantastic low prices on merchandise; any caller requesting your bank account or credit card number.

How to Avoid Telemarketing Fraud--If you hear these tip-offs just say NO and hang up!: act now or the offer will expire; you've won a "free" gift, vacation or prize, but you must pay for "postage and handling" or some other charge; you must send money, give a credit or bank card number, or have your check picked up by courier before you can think it over; you can't afford to miss this high-profit, no-risk offer; we can get your money back!; make a decision based on trust; use of high pressure sales tactics when you say no.

Mail Fraud--If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Watch for fake contests, prizes, lotteries, chain letters, insurance deals, land and advance-fee selling swindles, franchise and charity schemes, work-at-home and fraudulent diploma schemes, and promotions for fake health cures, beauty devices, and diets.

How to Avoid Mail Fraud--Don't believe you have won any contest until you receive the check, and if you have to pay money or buy something to get the check, it is a scam. For more information contact Postal Service Mail Fraud Complaint Center at 1-800-372-8347 or National Fraud Information Center 1-800-876-7060.

Health Fraud--Some health fraud scams to watch for are advertisements for fake "cures"; fraudulent medical and health services marketed via the television or telephone (victims send in their money and never receive the ordered item or receive a copy rather than an authentic product); "free" hearing tests and hearing aids; health care fraud where phony or real physicians take advantage of patients as a means of getting money from the victim's insurance company; and bogus insurance companies.

Elder Abuse Awareness Kit

How to Avoid Health Fraud--Beware of "free hearing tests" and never agree to a hearing test in your home; shop around before buying; question any "free" medical service or quick or painless cure; avoid special, secret, ancient, or foreign formulas that are only available by mail or from only one supplier.

Money-related Fraud--theft of stocks and bonds that are stored at home; mismanagement of assets by caregivers; real estate rip-offs; ATM "repairman" thefts of cash, ATM cards, or account passwords; check forgery; non-refundable fees for services not delivered.

How to Avoid Money-related Fraud--Avoid or hang up on strangers who want to take your money or know about your finances; say "No!" to anyone who presses you to make an immediate decision; never give anyone a blank check; count your change and check your receipts; don't give your credit card number over the phone unless you have made the call to what you know is a reputable company; be cautious if you don't have experience in handling money. Contact the Women's Financial Information Program of the American Association of Retired Persons for more information at 1-202-434-6030.

Slamming--Your telephone long distance carrier service is changed without your permission. It is illegal.

How to Avoid Slamming--Check your telephone bill carefully every month.

Cramming--Charges are made to your credit card or phone bill which you did not authorize. You don't have to pay for fraudulent charges.

How to Avoid Cramming--Carefully review your telephone bill and credit card bills each month; if you fill out a form to enter a contest or sweepstakes, read the fine print to be sure you are not authorizing changes or charges to your telephone.

Elder Abuse Awareness Kit

Talks of elder as a burden

Signs of Financial Abuse

Frequent expensive gifts from elder to caregiver

Elder's personal belongings, papers, credit cards missing

Numerous unpaid bills

A recent will when elder seems incapable of writing will

Caregiver's name added to bank account

Elder unaware of monthly income

Elder signs on loan

Frequent checks made out to "cash"

Unusual activity in bank account

Irregularities on tax return

Elder unaware of reason for appointment with banker or attorney

Caregiver's refusal to spend money on elder

Signatures on checks or legal documents that do not resemble elder's signature



- unsolicited phone calls from operators offering "fantastic opportunities" to claim prizes or invest;
- difficulty covering basic expenses such as food, utilities, etc., when income should support these needs;
- at the bank, accompaniment of the elder by a stranger who encourages a large withdrawal; and
- checks and withdrawals for individuals, marketing companies, or other businesses, or transactions that the elder cannot explain.

Indicators of financial abuse.³⁴ These include the following:

- A recent acquaintance expresses an interest in finances, promises to provide care, or ingratiates him- or herself with the elder.
 - A relative or caregiver has no visible means of support and is overly interested in the elder's financial affairs.
 - A relative or caregiver expresses concern over the cost of caring for the elder, or is reluctant to spend money for needed medical treatment.
 - The utility and other bills are not being paid.
 - The elder's placement, care, or possessions are inconsistent with the size of his or her estate.
 - A relative or caregiver isolates the elder, makes excuses when friends or family call or visit, and does not give the elder messages.
 - A relative or caregiver gives implausible explanations about finances, and the elder is unaware of or unable to explain the arrangements made.
 - Checking account and credit card statements are sent to a relative or caregiver and are not accessible to the elder.
 - At the bank, the elder is accompanied by a relative or caregiver who refuses to let the elder speak for him- or herself, and/or the elder appears nervous or afraid of the person accompanying him or her.
-



- The elder is concerned or confused about "missing money."
- There are suspicious signatures on the elder's checks, or the elder signs checks and another party fills in the payee and amount sections.
- There is an unusual amount of banking activity, particularly just after joint accounts are set up or someone new starts helping with the elder's finances.
- A will, power of attorney, or other legal document is drafted, but the elder does not understand its implications.

These warning signs and indicators have been incorporated into a variety of education tools targeting family members, banks, attorneys, and other concerned parties. These are discussed in the "Responses" section of this guide.

Lack of Oversight of Legal Documents

Given that legal documents such as trusts, joint bank accounts, and powers of attorney give a third party such enormous decision-making power, it is surprising that the preparation and execution of these documents is not more closely regulated. With regard to powers of attorney, very few states require them to be registered, few require a lawyer's involvement in drafting the document, and witnesses are not required to ensure the elder's signature is voluntary.³⁵ Although most states require notaries, they are not trained to assess mental capacity and therefore cannot protect an impaired elder from abuse. No record of ongoing use is provided to the elder, so even fully competent seniors are not able to monitor transactions made on their accounts. Finally, few states have formal procedures for revoking the authority granted under power of attorney, which allows the offender to continue abusing this power even after intervention.



Laws and Agencies Involved

Every state has adopted laws to prohibit particular types of fraud and, often, to enhance penalties for fraud against the elderly. Older consumers are, of course, protected by general consumer protection laws, telemarketing laws, and other statutes governing theft, embezzlement, fraud, etc. However, given that each state crafts its own laws, there are significant differences that make a description of national legislation concerning elder financial abuse impossible. These differences tend to apply in the following six areas:³⁶

1. definition of "elderly";
2. definition of abuse, whether physical abuse, sexual abuse, financial abuse, or neglect;
3. classification of abuse as criminal or civil;
4. standards for reporting abuse;
5. methods for investigating abuse; and
6. recommended sanctions.

Not only do these differences make it difficult to describe the various legislative approaches, but they also make it difficult to investigate and prosecute fraud offenders who may have victimized people in several states, all of which have different statutory requirements.

Further, fraud and financial abuse cases come under the jurisdiction of several agencies. Federal agencies such as the FBI, Postal Inspection Service, and Secret Service, as well as state and local police, may be involved in investigating large-scale consumer fraud operations. The lack of information-sharing across these agencies has been identified as a significant barrier to effective intervention.³⁷



When a financial crime involves the misuse or abuse of legal documents, the case may also be classified as a civil matter, requiring additional cooperation with the prosecutor and court of jurisdiction. Banks and phone companies are also critical partners in investigating fraud or financial exploitation. Finally, given that the senior's welfare is paramount, social service agencies, such as adult protective services and medical and mental health services, must also be included in a coordinated effort to protect the senior from further harm.

Fraud and financial exploitation cases present a complicated web of behavior, intent, and consequences. The scope of jurisdiction and various areas of expertise required are unlikely to be found in any one agency, requiring cooperation across traditional jurisdictions and professional boundaries.

Elder Abuse Awareness Kit

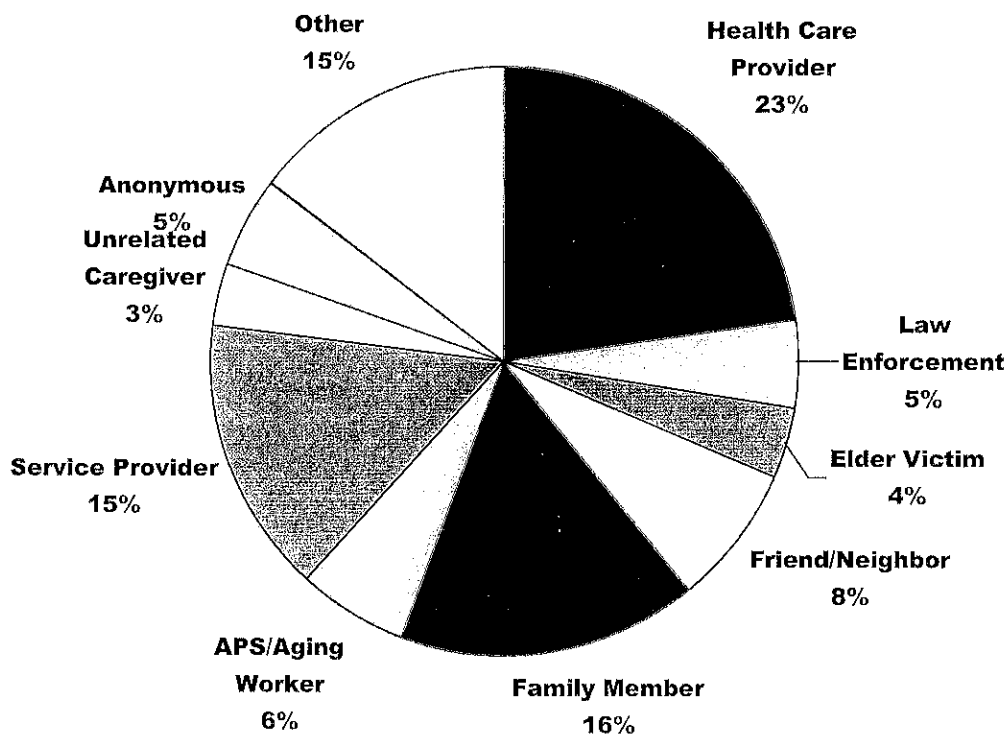
Adult Protective Services Section

Facts and Figures

- The U.S. has 44 million persons age 60 or older, and 36 million people with disabilities.
- In the most recent year studied, Adult Protective Services completed 364,512 investigations of abuse, neglect, or exploitation involving older persons living at home (in private, non-institutional settings). Of these, an estimated 43% were confirmed.
- In the last decade, the number of domestic elder abuse reports investigated by Adult Protective Services across the nation has increased by more than 150 percent.
- Almost 62% percent of all cases of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of adults living at home involve mistreatment by other people and 38% involve self-neglect.
- Domestic elder abuse is a family problem – almost 90% of abusers were family members.
- Men were the abusers in over half of elder abuse cases.

Reporters of Elder Abuse

Source for all Graphs: National Center on Elder Abuse - FY 1996 State Statistics

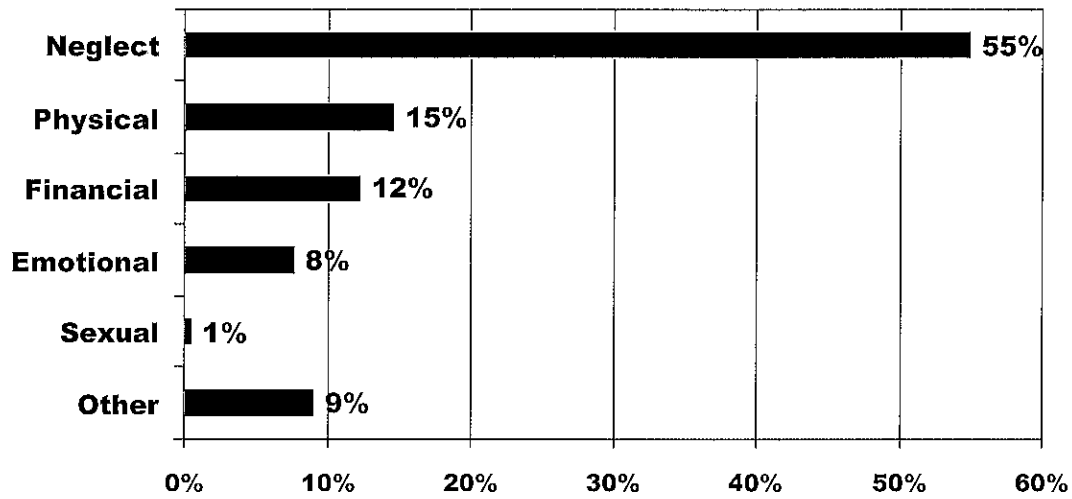


National Association of Adult Protective Services Administrators
National Center on Elder Abuse

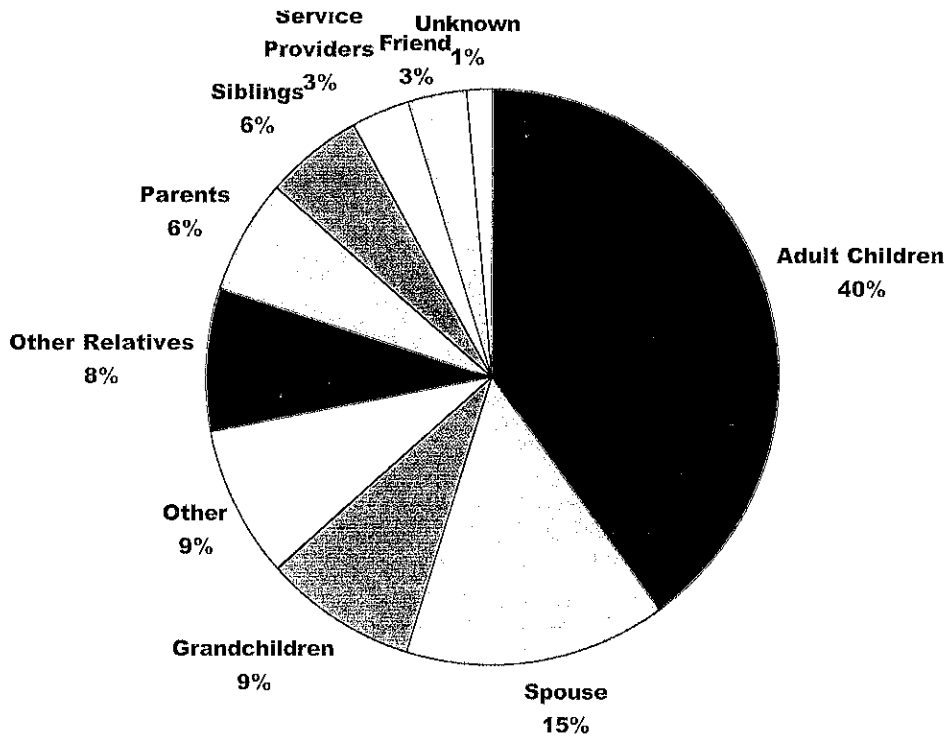
Elder Abuse Awareness Kit

Adult Protective Services Section

Types of Domestic Elder Abuse Reported



Breakdown of Confirmed Perpetrators



To Report Suspected Fraud or Senior Abuse

1) Call the Adult Protective Services:

Salt Lake County (801) 264-7669\

All other counties 1-800-371-7897

2) They will ask for your name, address, and other identifying information. Everything is done over the phone. Without a physical address there can't be an investigation. The victim doesn't need to contact the police, Adult Protective Services will contact them.

3) The police will come to the victim's house to ask questions such as: the name, address, and phone number and any other identifying information of the alleged perpetrator. They will also ask the reason for the phone call (alleged abuse, alleged fraud, neglect, etc.)

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services
1100 Vermont Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530

To obtain details on COPS programs, call the
COPS Office Response Center at 800.421.6770

Visit COPS Online at the address listed below.
Updated Date: August 4, 2004

e07042443
ISBN: 1-932582-22-3

