



# INFORMATIONAL MESSAGE

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## Preventing Financial Scams among Connecticut Seniors

The Connecticut Intelligence Center, a law enforcement partnership within the Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, is warning about a dramatic increase in financial scams targeting the elderly in Connecticut and the nation. The FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) received 859,532 complaints in 2024, with **losses reported at \$16.6 billion**, a 388% increase from 2023. In 2024 “false pretense” scams cost an estimated **\$31.9 million** to Connecticut victims, most of whom were 65 or older, according to the 2024 Crime in Connecticut Report.

### Elder Fraud Scammers: Common Tactics and Techniques



**Lottery and sweepstakes scam:** You are told you have won a large prize but must pay a fee or taxes upfront to claim it. Legitimate lotteries do not require you to pay before you receive your winnings.



**Grandparent scam:** A caller, sometimes using AI to mimic a voice, claims to be a grandchild or other relative in an emergency and asks for immediate money. They often plead for secrecy, adding to the urgency.



**Home repair scam:** Involve unsolicited contractors who use high-pressure tactics to gain access to a home for unnecessary and shoddy work. Be wary of solicitations, never pay a large upfront amount, and always get multiple written estimates from licensed and insured contractors.

### What to watch out for

- High pressure, urgent timeline (“you must send money now”).
- Request to pay with gift cards, wire transfer, prepaid cards, personal checks or cryptocurrency.
- Caller says you must not contact family or police.
- Caller ID spoofing (it may show a local number or government agency but is fake).
- Unwilling to meet in person or hesitation to identify themselves with official credentials.



## What to do if you believe you are a victim

- Contact the local police to report the incident.
- Do not transfer money and do not give any payment information.
- Do not give any personal information or confirm/repeat social security numbers, birthdates, bank information or account numbers.
- Verify by calling the family member with a known number not one provided by the caller.
- If you have already made a payment contact your bank or the payment service immediately.

## Where to go for help

- National Elder Fraud Hot Line- 1-833-372-8311
- Elder Fraud- Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) [www.ic3.gov/Crimeinfo/ElderFraud](http://www.ic3.gov/Crimeinfo/ElderFraud)
- Federal Trade Commission (FTC) <https://reportfraud.ftc.gov>
- File a Suspicious Activity Report with CTIC [https://portal.ct.gov/demhs/homeland-security/suspicious-activity-reporting-form?language=en\\_US](https://portal.ct.gov/demhs/homeland-security/suspicious-activity-reporting-form?language=en_US) or download the “CT SAFE” application on your phone.

## How Family Members and Caregivers Can Help

| Warning signs of financial exploitation  | Proactive Measures to Take   |
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| Sudden changes in bank accounts or banking practices, an unexplained withdrawal of large sums                          | Use direct deposit for regular income and set up automatic payments for bills to create a clear transaction record and minimize risk                   |
| The inclusion of additional names on an older adult’s bank signature card  | Thoroughly check the references and credentials of any new caregiver/financial advisor before granting them access to personal information or finances |
| Unauthorized withdrawal of the older adult’s funds using their ATM card  | Review activity in accounts. Set up alerts for large withdrawals or unusual activity   |
| Provision of substandard care or bills left unpaid despite the availability of adequate financial resources            | Consolidate accounts, close unused credit cards, and opt out of credit card solicitations  |
| Discovery of a forged signature for financial transactions or for the titles of the older adult’s possessions          | Use strong and unique passwords with a combination of numbers, letters and symbols   |
| Sudden appearance of previously uninvolved relatives claiming their rights to an older adult’s property or possessions | Establish a durable power of attorney (POA) to appoint a trusted person to manage finances if needed   |
| Unexplained sudden transfer of assets to a family member or someone outside the family                                 | Use strong and unique passwords with a combination of numbers, letters and symbols   |
| The provision of services that are not necessary, contractors asking for large sums of money upfront                   | Be wary of solicitation, estimates that seem unusually low, and ensure contractors are licensed and insured  |

Sources: FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center, Internet Crime Report, 2024; DESPP Crime Analysis Unit, Crime in Connecticut, 2024; AARP Fraud Scams-Fraud Helpline.