

IMPOSTER SCAMS: Who are they, really?

Imposter scammers lie about who they are in order to trick you into sending money to them or provide them with sensitive information.

Grandchild or Friend “In Trouble” Scams:

The imposter will pretend to be your grandchild, other family member, or a friend.



They will tell you a story about how they were in an accident, are in jail, or are stuck in a foreign country and that they desperately and quickly need your help.

They may have researched social media to find out personal details, like the fact that your granddaughter calls you Papa and attends a certain college, or that your friend is traveling in Mexico.

They will play on your emotions with urgency and secrecy. “I don’t want to spend the night in jail.” “Please don’t tell mom and dad!”

They may call in the middle of the night to increase the feeling of urgency and catch you when you are not thinking as clearly.

RED FLAGS:

- ✓ Their voice is muffled or they say that they sound funny because of something that happened - “the accident broke my nose.”
- ✓ You know that your grandchild, family member or friend is not traveling.
- ✓ They ask for a significant amount of money to “cover court costs” or “pay my bail” or “hire a lawyer.”
- ✓ They call you by a name you don’t use (like grandma instead of nana.)

WHAT TO DO:

- ✓ Ask a personal question, but don’t disclose too much information before confirming that it really is your grandchild/friend. If a caller says, "It's me, Grandma!" don't respond with a name, but instead let the caller explain who he/she is. Ask a simple question that your grandchild/friend would know such as their middle name or what gift you gave them for Christmas.
- ✓ Call a family member or mutual friend. Even though the scammer will beg you to keep this a secret, discuss the situation with someone and chances are you will find that your grandchild/friend is safe at home.
- ✓ **DO NOT** send them money or call them with gift card numbers.
- ✓ **Call 855-444-3911** anytime 24/7 to report a suspected imposter scam. You can also report it to the Michigan Attorney General at 877-765-8388.