



ATTORNEY GENERAL'S
SCAM ALERT



A Consumer Protection Alert from Oregon Attorney General John Kroger

Nov. 2, 2009

Consumer Protection Hotline: 1-877-877-9392.

Online: www.doj.state.or.us.

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GRANDPARENT PHONE SCAM ON THE RISE

Attorney General John Kroger is warning Oregon families about scammers who pose as grandchildren claiming to be in trouble and needing money immediately. The Oregon Department of Justice's Consumer Protection Hotline has received several recent calls about the "emergency scam," also known as the "grandparent scam." The scam targets grandparents with fake stories about family members stranded in Canada in urgent need of money. The emergency scam usually goes something like this:

"Hi grandma, it's me, your favorite grandkid! I am up in Canada right now with my good friend John. Please don't tell Mom and Dad, but I had an accident. John and I are in a little trouble and need your help. We hit a car and needed to hire an attorney. Can you please wire me \$4,700 so I can pay my attorney and come home? Please don't tell Mom and Dad! I promise to pay you back when I get home!"

There are several red flags that indicate a scammer is at work. Be wary of a caller who:(1) Requests that money be wired in a very short time frame; (2) Claims to be stuck in a foreign country; (3) Insists on secrecy; and/or (4) Gets some personal details wrong.

Scammers prey on the emotions of grandparents wanting to help their grandchildren. This is a despicable scam, largely conducted by con artists in Canada. Before wiring money, grandparents should independently call and confirm the whereabouts of their family members. Be highly skeptical of any phone request for money wires. Ask personal questions to the callers to confirm their identity, about such things as schools attended, pet names, presents given or received, or names of other family members.

Oregonians who think they have been a victim of the "grandparent scam" should call the Oregon Attorney General Consumer Hotline at 1-877-877-9392 (www.doj.state.or.us) and the Federal Trade Commission at 1-800-FTC-HELP (www.ftc.gov).