# Semior Fraud PROTECTION KIT

Helping Seniors Stay Safely at Home



Brought to you by the Home Instead Senior Care® Network 800-640-3914

#### Scammed:

It's the word no family caregiver wants to hear when it comes to a senior loved one.

The growing incidence of senior scams is putting many older adults in harm's way, threatening to strip them of their assets, their independence and their trust. That's why the Home Instead Senior Care® network has launched the Protect Seniors from Fraud<sup>SM</sup> public education program and created this Senior Fraud Protection Kit.

In this kit, you will find helpful articles to educate you about senior fraud.

#### Specific topics include:

- Financial Abuse Tactics
- Top Senior Scams
- Top 5 Reasons Why Seniors are Targets
- Impact of Crime on Elderly

You will then find tools to help you assess the potential threat to a senior:

- Senior Fraud Triggers and Targets
- Criminal Target Scale

Finally, we've provided a series of checklists that you can use to help protect the senior:

- Scam-Proof Your Senior Checklist
- Anatomy of a Scam Checklist: Senior Mail
- Anatomy of a Scam Checklist: Telephone
- Anatomy of a Scam Checklist: Computer
- National Do-Not-Call Registry
- What to Do If Your Senior Has Been Scammed



Print Solution: 🖹



Print the Anatomy of a Scam checklists, laminate them if preferred, and place them by the phone, next to the computer, and on the desk—places where the senior can reference them quickly when they receive a questionable contact.

The Home Instead Senior Care network is dedicated to helping seniors stay safely in their homes. If a senior is living alone and needs an extra set of alert eyes and ears, contact Home Instead Senior Care to find a local office near you.







## **Financial Abuse Tactics**

Cons against older adults aren't always acts of blatant theft. They can be subtle, like the retailer who over-charges an uninformed older adult or an individual who bills for a service he or she did not provide. A 2011 MetLife Study\* has identified three elder financial abuse strategies: crimes of occasion, crimes of desperation and crimes of predation.



Crimes of occasion, or opportunity, are incidents of financial abuse or exploitation that occur because the victim is merely in the way of what the perpetrator wants. The elder has money, assets, and the like, and an occasion presents itself for the perpetrator to avail himself or herself of the resource.



Crimes of desperation are typically those in which family members or friends become so desperate for money that they will do whatever it takes to get it. Many of these family members are dependent on the senior for resources. The exploiting family member or friend comes to believe that, in return for care (actual or perceived and however little that care may be), he or she is due compensation (money, possessions, etc.).



Crimes of predation, or occupation, occur when trust is engendered specifically for the intention of financial abuse later. A relationship is built, either through a bond of trust created by developing a relationship or as a trusted professional advisor. The taking of assets is by stealth and cunning.

When seniors don't realize they are being swindled and the perpetrator knows no one is there to monitor the senior's transactions, large losses can result.

\*MetLife; online at http://www.metlife.com/assets/cao/mmi/publications/studies/2011/mmi-elder-financial-abuse.pdf

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## **Top Senior Scams**

Seniors are under attack in the United States from criminals – domestic and foreign – who devise something new every day in an attempt to steal their treasure, whether it's money, their IDs or property, crime prevention officials say.

According to the National Association of Triads, the top six scams involving seniors are:



#### Telemarketing that includes internet, phones and mail.

Scammers might send out an email on bank letterhead and say there is a problem with the account and the senior needs to update information, password and account number.



#### Fake charities.

There's one where you get a call from a charity saying they are supporting a reputable organization and ask you to make a donation. What they don't tell you is that they are not authorized to be fundraising for that organization. While as little as 3 percent will go to that organization, 97 percent may stay in the scammer's pocket.



#### Sweepstakes.

Many times people will get an official-looking check. The account number is fraudulent, but the routing number is correct. The bank reads it as a valid check. What the sweepstakes will tell a senior is, "Cash the check, you get the bulk of the money and send \$5,000 to us for processing." Fifteen days later, that check bounces and the senior is liable for that \$5,000. Some even come looking like official IRS refunds with the message: "Here's your check, but you need to pay the late fees."



#### Health-care fraud.

It's a growing "industry" and frequently ignored. With health care, there can be misuse of the medical card. Scammers then fabricate the need for treatment and get paid for it. For instance, scammers can find out a senior is diabetic, call him up and say, "Give us your Medicare card number, and we can send your supplies through the mail." Or they can obtain free treatment by assuming that older adult's identity.



#### Identity theft.

A senior gets the call: "We need to verify your account number; give us the last four digits of your Social Security number." They can match that with the phone number, last place of employment, home address, and once they have put that package together, take a loan out on the home, open credit cards, go to big-box stores and open an account, or get a \$5,000 line of credit. A senior gets the bill, and they get the goods.



#### Financial exploitation, including online investment and securities fraud.

Scammers will sell seniors long-term securities or stock. They have no problems selling a woman in her 80s a certificate that doesn't mature for 20 or 25 years. They're relying on her inability to understand the fine print. Then if she needs the money, she must break the bond and pay the penalties. Scammers make a commission.



Contact local law enforcement if you think someone has scammed your senior or might be trying to do so. For more about protecting your seniors from scammers, contact your local Home Instead Senior Care® office, or visit

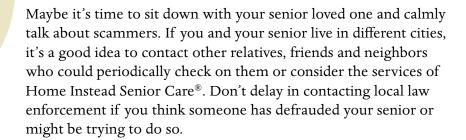


# Top 5 Reasons Why Seniors are Targets

Never underestimate the resourcefulness of scammers. Some drive around neighborhoods during the day, looking for older adults working in the yard or getting their mail. Scammers make a note of addresses, return and try to sell the seniors on an unnecessary repair, such as getting their roofs fixed.

The National Association of Triads, a partnership of law enforcement, older adults and community groups that promotes senior safety, describes these common characteristics that make seniors vulnerable:

- **Availability:** Seniors are seen as a target because they are retired and less mobile, and at home for the calls. Scam artists can troll for victims because they can call or drop by.
- 2. Isolation: Seniors are often alone because families move away and sometimes have little or no interaction with loved ones. Some seniors don't have others to help review large decisions.
- Loneliness: Because of their isolation, seniors' friendships often can be limited, and this can make them vulnerable to that friendly cold caller who drops by the house. Some scams are even perpetrated by seemingly trusted people who work to build new friendships with older adults and then prey on their vulnerabilities.
- Sickness: Chronic health issues mean that many older adults have difficulty maintaining their property. Scam artists know that. A senior may rely on outside sources for help. Unscrupulous workers can bilk seniors out of thousands of dollars for a job that should only cost hundreds of dollars. Dementia can exacerbate the problem.
- **Prosperity:** Money is one of the most notable reasons for senior vulnerability. Scammers see them as a supply of wealth that includes homes, property, life savings and other assets.



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## **Impact of Crime on Elderly**

The scammer had enough personal information that seemed to make his request convincing. He knew the elderly woman's husband was in the hospital when he called. So the older adult sent off the requested amount. Fortunately for the senior, a Western Union official became suspicious and held up the wire transaction until it could be verified. The scam was successfully averted, but the psychological damage to the senior continues. "She's still very upset," said a Home Instead Senior Care® franchise owner, who now provides CAREGiver<sup>SM</sup> service for the senior.

The damage may continue to be hurtful for some time for a senior who has been scammed or who has been approached by a scammer, said Ed Hutchison, National Association of Triads director. Hutchison said seniors who are victimized by crime or who feel threatened by scammers may suffer these repercussions:

#### 1. Physical and emotional impact.

They may recuperate more slowly, and life-threatening illnesses can occur.

#### 2. Inability to recover financially.

If they lose income from a financial or real estate scam, robbery or burglary, they often struggle even more if they are living on a fixed income.

#### 3. Loss of independence.

Studies have shown that crime is the catalyst that can bring an end to emotional and financial independence and curtail the lives and lifespan of seniors.

#### 4. Diminished quality of life.

Inability to recover, worrying about the likelihood that it will happen again and regretting the consequences of that poor decision may drive victims to become reclusive, embarrassed and distressed, and suffer from poor self-confidence.

#### 5. Vicarious victimization.

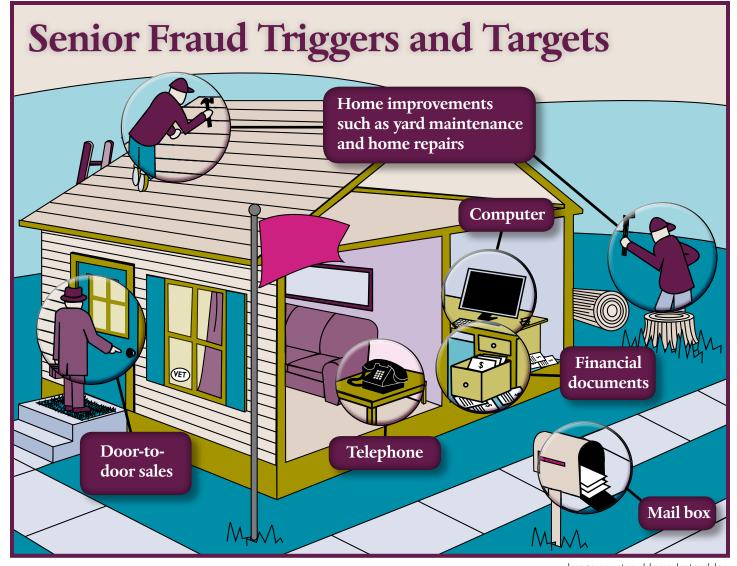
The National Center on Elder Abuse has identified a phenomenon called "vicarious victimization," which means the senior has not been a victim but fears being one. They may alter their lifestyle by withdrawing from society, abandoning friends, church and shopping. They may see the world in a warped perspective, which can happen to seniors who are homebound and get all their news from TV.

If your senior is living alone, a Home Instead CAREGiver can provide an extra set of alert eyes and ears for reassurance and protection beyond providing companionship, light housekeeping, meal preparation, medication reminders and transportation.

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 ${\bf Image\ courtesy\ Home\ Instead, Inc.}$ 

Home is where an older adult should feel the safest. But scammers have found a way to invade the secure lives of seniors both inside and outside their houses. Fraudsters often troll neighborhoods looking for homes that could be owned by older adults. Triggers could be a grass mat at the front door, veteran's stickers in the window and a patriotic flag on the lawn. Seniors working in their yards or going to the mailbox during the day also could make them vulnerable to door-to-door sales representatives or home improvement scammers. In addition, con artists can target seniors' mail, the internet and telephone, as well as unsecured documents.

The resources of the Senior Fraud Protection Kit at <u>SeniorFraudProtectionKit.com</u> can provide family caregivers and seniors with the tools to help make home the safe harbor it was always intended to be.



For more information about protecting your seniors from scammers, contact your <u>local Home Instead Senior Care® office</u>, or visit



## **Criminal Target Scale**

The prospect of an older loved one falling prey to a scammer can send fear through the hearts of any family caregiver. That's why the nonprofit National Association of Triads and the Home Instead Senior Care® network have developed this Criminal Target Scale, which can help families assess the vulnerability of a senior loved one.

Answer the following questions to help determine your loved one's scam risk threat.	Yes	No
My senior lives alone.		
My older loved one is alone for long periods of time.		
My older loved one has a land line phone.		
My senior has few visitors.		
My senior has never signed up for the Do-Not-Call Registry.		
My older loved one would never be rude to anyone on the phone in an effort to end the call.		
My senior has a computer and is on it every day.		
My older adult likes to order online.		
My older loved one sends donations to one or more charities.		
My senior loved one is always looking for a needy cause.		
My senior flies an American flag.		
My senior displays veteran's stickers in car/home windows.		
My older loved one has an unsecured mailbox near the street.		
My senior takes pain medication and leaves it on the counter.		
My older adult often looks to neighbors and others for help.		
My older adult is generally trusting of people's motives.		
My senior has chronic health problems.		
My senior has a computer, but isn't very familiar with how to use it.		
My older adult has dementia or Alzheimer's disease.		
My senior spends a lot of time outside during the day and enjoys engaging neighbors and anyone else who comes by in conversation.		
My older loved one is worried that he/she might outlive his/her money.		
My older loved one is always looking for ways to make extra money.		
My older adult would do anything to help a grandchild, especially giving money.		

If you answered "yes" to three or more of these statements, your older adult could be at risk of a scam.



Check out **ProtectSeniorsFromFraud.com** to discover additional resources for helping to protect an older adult from scam.



## Scam-Proof Your Senior Checklist



According to a 2011 AARP study, only 25 percent of scam victims over age 55 have reported to authorities that they've fallen victim to fraud. Shame and embarrassment can play a role in an older adult's reluctance to talk about being scammed.

Family members may help seniors avoid the humiliation and potential financial devastation of a con. The National Association of Triads, a partnership of law enforcement, older adults and community groups, along with the Home Instead Senior Care® network and the Better Business Bureau, recommend these tips to help keep seniors from being exploited.

Shred documents that could be useful to criminals, including bank statements, credit card statements and offers, and other financial information. Documents that need to be preserved, such as tax filings and car titles, should be stored in a safe deposit box.
Insist that your senior check with the Better Business Bureau before he or she acts on a phone call or a piece of mail, or agrees to a visit from an unknown person, business or charity. Point out suspicious mailings, especially look-alike envelopes that mimic letters sent from the Social Security Administration or Internal Revenue Service.
Add seniors to the national Do-Not-Call Registry. Instruct them to hang up if they get solicitation calls. Address the guilt factor by reminding an older adult it can be difficult to recognize a scam.
Insist that your senior never give out personal information nor agree to give money over the phone, rather ask for written information to be sent through the mail. The best rule of thumb is to "never provide information in a phone call that you did not initiate."
Make sure a charity is registered with the state attorney general. Make a written "giving plan" together: list which organizations the senior intends to support, and stick to it.
Establish a strong defense by posting a "No Solicitation" notice by a senior loved one's front door and help your senior to sort through his or her incoming mail. Watch TV with a loved one to monitor interest in infomercials or shopping shows.
Remember that all new technology has a learning curve. Educate your senior loved one about email and phishing tactics.
Watch for individuals who have befriended your loved one. Lonely or isolated seniors may be vulnerable to criminals who befriend them and provide companionship. Ask to talk to your parent's new friend to find out more. A thief likely won't stick around long to chat.
Seniors who are scammed may be embarrassed and try to hide what happened. Watch for changes in their lifestyle as well as any other unusual financial or business activity. If a senior can no longer handle his or her finances, encourage your loved one to put a plan in place that can help ensure bills are paid and assets are protected. That plan may include your senior designating a financial power of attorney or a representative to monitor credit card use, especially if he or she has dementia.
If you can't be there for your senior, find trustworthy people who can serve as eyes and ears for seniors by screening door-to-door scammers and others who seek to exploit by telephone or computer. Helpers could be neighbors, relatives, friends, faith community members or professional caregivers such as those from the Home Instead Senior Care network.



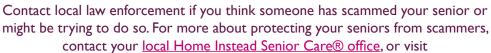
Contact local law enforcement if you think someone has scammed your senior or might be trying to do so. For more about protecting your seniors from scammers,

contact your local Home Instead Senior Care® office, or visit



# Anatomy of a Scam Checklist: Senior Mail

These strategies, compiled from the National Association of Triads and the Home Instead Senior Care® network, can help seniors protect themselves:				
	Consider a second set of eyes to look over bill payments and mail.		Know when bank and credit card statements, and pension payments are supposed to arrive each month. Consider getting statements online.	
	Don't send any personal information – Social Security number, bank and credit card account numbers, phone numbers or address – through the mail to anyone who you don't know, no matter what they've offered or promised.		Follow up if bills or new cards do not arrive on time.	
	Never respond to a sweepstakes letter by sending a check to claim a prize.		Carefully review monthly accounts for unauthorized charges.	
	Only send checks to charities with which you are familiar and that have been cleared through the Better Business Bureau or state attorney general.		If you order merchandise from a catalog and it doesn't arrive or isn't what you ordered, contact the company.	
	Don't respond to requests to send a "deposit" to "get started" with a work-at-home offer or a pyramid scheme.		If merchandise that a senior didn't order arrives COD (cash on delivery), do not open it, but send it back.	
	Buy and install a locking mailbox, or set up a P.O. box.		If you're getting unnecessary mail, contact the sender and ask to have your name removed from the mailing list. To cut down on the volume of unwanted bulk mail, get off as many national mailing lists as possible. Register at the Direct Marketing Association's Mail Preference Service at dmachoice.org/dma/member/regist.action.	
	Don't leave bill payment envelopes in your unsecured mailbox for pickup – take them to a postal mailbox.		If you continue to get mail that is obviously a scam, take it to your local post office and the mail will be forwarded to the U.S. postal inspector.	
	Know the billing cycles, and act on any missing mail.			







## Anatomy of a Scam Checklist: Senior Mail

For more information about protecting your seniors from scammers, contact your <u>local Home Instead Senior Care®</u> office, or visit <u>ProtectSeniorsFromFraud.com</u>.

Contact local law enforcement if you think someone has scammed your senior or might be trying to do so.

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# Anatomy of a Scam Checklist: Telephone

There are plenty of strategies to get personal information by phone; in fact, new ones surface every day. So how can a senior discern a telemarketing scam? Compiled from the National Association of Triads, the Home Instead Senior Care® network and the FBI, these are tips to help avert telephone scams:

Don't give any personal information on the phone. Some scammers say they represent a bank or other reputable financial institution and falsely tell seniors that their financial information or credit card has been compromised.	Obtain a salesperson's name, business identity, telephone number, street address, mailing address, and business license number and verify that before you transact business. Some con artists give out false names, telephone numbers, addresses and business license numbers.	
Don't trust that people are who they say they are. Some scammers say they are law enforcement officials who are trying to solve a crime that involves you, and they ask for personal information. Police always would contact a potential financial scam victim in person.	Don't buy over the phone from an unfamiliar company. Always check out unfamiliar calls from companies with your local consumer protection agency, Better Business Bureau, state attorney general, the National Fraud Information Center or other watchdog groups.	
Be wary when someone calls unexpectedly, even if they sound like the good guys. The real good guys will not ask for sensitive information.	Never respond to an offer you don't understand thoroughly.	
Beware of statements like: "You must act 'now' or the offer won't be good." "You've won a 'free' gift, vacation or prize." But you have to pay for "postage and handling" or other charges. "You must send money, give a credit card or bank account number, or have a check picked up by courier." You may hear this before you have had a chance to consider the offer carefully.	Don't be afraid to stop or interrupt a caller if he or she is trying to sell something you do not want. Use phrases like: "I never buy anything over the phone." "I don't respond to telephone solicitation." "I'm sorry I'm going to have to hang up." Then just hang up.	
Don't pay for a "free prize." If a caller tells you the payment is for taxes, he or she may be violating federal law.	If you have been victimized once, be wary of persons who call offering to help you recover your losses for a fee paid in advance.	



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# Anatomy of a Scam Checklist: Telephone

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	Phone:
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	Website:
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	Phone:
	Address:
	Website:
•	Contact 3
	Phone:
	Address:
	Website:
•	Contact 4
	Phone:
	Address:
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## Anatomy of a Scam Checklist: Computer

More seniors than ever are online. The Pew Research Center reports that 53 percent of those 65 and older use internet or email, and one in three (34 percent) now use social networking sites.\* The National Association of Triads, the Home Instead Senior Care® network and the FBI offer these tips for safer computer use:

Make sure your computer has all the security it needs and a security updating system. There are many anti-virus programs available, ranging from expensive to free, so check with a trusted source who is knowledgeable about computers.		When making online purchases, don't give out your credit-card number online unless the website is secure and reputable. Sometimes a tiny icon of a padlock appears to symbolize a higher level of security to transmit data. This icon is not a guarantee of a secure site, but it may provide some assurance; however, don't trust a website just because it claims to be secure.
Obtain a physical address rather than simply a post office box and a telephone number, and call the seller to see if the telephone number is correct and working.		Make sure you are purchasing merchandise from a reputable source. Do your homework on the individual or company to ensure that they are legitimate.
Avoid sending personal information.  Scammers might send out email on bank letterhead and say there is a problem with the account and you need to update information, password and account number.		Guard your account information carefully. Be skeptical of individuals representing themselves as Nigerian or foreign government officials asking for your help in placing large sums of money in overseas bank accounts. Do not believe the promise of large sums of money for your cooperation.
Learn to identify spam and scams. Don't respond to emails from people you don't know or to emails you haven't expected to receive. Above all, don't give out personal information, including your Social Security number and banking and credit-card numbers, to anyone you don't know.		Send an email to the seller to make sure the email address is active, and be wary of those who utilize free email services where a credit card wasn't required to open the account. Check with the Better Business Bureau from the seller's area. Check out other websites regarding this person/company.

http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2012/Older-adults-and-internet-use.aspx

Contact local law enforcement if you think someone has scammed your senior or might be trying to do so. For more about protecting your seniors from scammers, contact your <u>local Home Instead Senior Care® office</u>, or visit





## Anatomy of a Scam Checklist: Computer

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Phone:		
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## National Do-Not-Call-Registry

The Federal Communications Commission and the Federal Trade Commission have a national Do-Not-Call Registry that applies to all telemarketers – with the exception of certain nonprofit organizations – and covers interstate and intrastate calls.



You can register your phone numbers for free, and they will remain on the list until you remove them or discontinue service. The Do-Not-Call Registry does not prevent all unwanted calls, including calls from organizations with which you have established a business relationship or you have given prior written permission, plus calls that are not commercial.

### How to Register

People may register their residential telephone number; including wireless numbers, on the Do-Not-Call Registry at no cost. To register online and for additional information, go to **donotcall.gov**. To register by phone, call **888.382.1222**; for TTY, call **866.290.4236**. You must call from the phone number you wish to register.

#### How to File a Complaint

You can file a complaint by calling **888.CALL.FCC** (**888.225.5322**) voice or **888.TELL.FCC** (**888.835.5322**) TTY, by fax to **866.418.0232**, via an electronic complaint form at <u>donotcall.gov</u>, or by mail. To process your complaint, you must either fill in the electronic form or otherwise indicate:

- Your name and address and the home phone number where you received the solicitation;
- Identification of the company whose products or services were being advertised or sold, and any phone numbers included in the call plus a description of the call;
- Any phone number provided to allow you to "opt-out" of future calls;
- Whether you gave the caller express prior permission to call and whether you have an established business relationship with the caller.
- If mailing a complaint, send to: FCC, Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, Consumer Inquiries and Complaints Division, 445 12th St., SW, Washington, DC 20554.



For more information about protecting your seniors from scammers, contact your <u>local Home Instead Senior Care® office</u>, or visit



## What to Do if Your Senior Has Been Scammed

You thought this could never happen to your senior: the cruel and heartbreaking loss of his or her hard-earned life savings as a result of a scam.

Here are some key steps to follow if a senior has been scammed, according to a state attorney general's office and the Better Business Bureau:

Contact the police. File a report with your local police department. If the theft did not take place in your area, file a report with the police from the area where you believe the theft took place.

Get a copy of the police report. You may need that documentation to support your claims to credit bureaus, creditors, debt collectors or other companies. If you are unable to obtain a copy of the police report, be sure to get the report number.

Close your accounts. If you notice that any accounts under your senior's name have been tampered with or opened without consent, close them immediately. Call each bank or company and then follow up in writing. If there are fraudulent charges or debts on the account or if a new account has been opened, immediately file a fraud report with the bank's fraud department. If you close an existing bank account and open a new one, be sure to create new PINs (Personal Identification Numbers) and passwords.

Eliminate fraudulent new accounts: If a new account has been opened without your senior's knowledge and consent, ask the company with which the account has been opened if it has a fraud department. If it does, file a fraud report with that department. If not, ask if the company will accept an IDTheft Affidavit from the Federal Trade Commission. You can print out an <a href="http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/resources/forms/affidavit.pdf">http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/resources/forms/affidavit.pdf</a> [ID Theft Affidavit]. The FTC also provides <a href="http://www.ftc.gov/opa/2002/02/idtheft.shtm">http://www.ftc.gov/opa/2002/02/idtheft.shtm</a> [more information on fraud].

File a federal complaint. The Federal Trade Commission is the federal consumer protection agency. The FTC, in conjunction with the FBI, maintains an Identity Theft Data Clearinghouse. The FTC aids identity theft investigations by collecting complaints from victims and sharing the information with law enforcement agencies, credit bureaus, companies where the fraud took place, and other government agencies.

Initiate a fraud alert. The next step is to place a fraud alert on your senior's credit file as well as review the credit report. This will prevent a thief from opening any more accounts in the older adult's name. You should contact the three major credit bureaus. If you place a fraud alert with one credit bureau, that credit bureau is required by law to contact the other two bureaus. The other bureaus will include the fraud alert in their reports. However, to ensure that the alert is included in the credit file as quickly as possible, you should contact all three credit bureaus immediately.

Follow-up: After a fraud alert is included in the credit history, your senior is entitled to receive a free copy of his or her credit report from each of the credit bureaus. Request a copy and review reports for unopened accounts, unfamiliar debts on the account, inquiries from companies you don't know and inaccurate information.

Contact your local Better Business Bureau: Go to bbb.org to find a location near you or a senior loved one and report the crime. While a Better Business Bureau may not be able to locate your senior's money, it can offer support and tips. Many BBBs also have senior lines, which provide information specific to seniors and the most prevalent con games going on in your area.



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