

*From Acting Chief of Police Ryan M. Newell*

The Southborough Police Department would like to remind you to be aware of one of the most common Scams going on in our Country right now: The Grandparent Scam.

*What is the Grandparent Scam?*

The victim receives a call from someone claiming to be his or her grandchild. The scammer usually begins speaking in a low voice, so that the victim can barely hear them. The person on the other end of the phone claims (usually in a frantic-sounding voice), that he or she is in trouble. Some examples are "There's been an accident!" or "I've just been arrested!". They may add claims that they have been hospitalized or stuck in a foreign country, as well. To make the impersonation more convincing, they may also add in a few family particulars that they have researched from a relative's social media account or public records. They may turn the phone over to another scammer who pretends to be a "doctor", "police officer" or "lawyer" to back up their story. The person claiming to be your "grandchild" asks you to send money immediately and provides details on how. The usual requests are through gift cards, prepaid cards or wiring money to a particular Western Union office. The call usually comes late at night. Scammers figure that an older person may get confused more easily if they call at this time. They also usually add in the plea, "Don't tell Mom and Dad!"

*What should you do if you get one of these calls?*

Hang up immediately and call the grandchild or other family member in question- on a known number- to make sure that they are safe. With luck, they will answer the call, and you will then know that the supposed "emergency" call was a scam.

Set the privacy settings on your social media accounts so that only people you know can access your posts and photos. Scammers search Facebook, Instagram and other social networks for family information they can use to fool you. Contact other family members or friends if you have any concern that the emergency could be real. Scammers plead with you to keep the situation a secret, so you will not try to confirm it.

If you speak to someone who claims to be a police officer; Call the relevant law enforcement agency to verify the person's identity and any information they've given you.

*Trust your instincts.* If something doesn't feel right, it probably isn't!

Call the Southborough Police Department and advise us of the scam call at (508) 485-2121.

Thank you and stay safe, everyone!

Respectfully,

*Lieutenant Ryan M. Newell*

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