

It's more common than we think.

Senior financial exploitation and fraud is the illegal or improper use of a senior's resources for another's profit or advantage.

- ⇒ **Exploitation** usually involves someone the senior knows, such as a family member or caregiver.
- ⇒ **Fraud** is usually perpetrated by a stranger, such as a telemarketer or investment promoter.

The key to protecting yourself is information and protective action. Use this guide to help spot red flags of potential exploitation and fraud early on so that you can protect yourself. If you've been victimized, remember it is never too late to seek help!

Experts in elder fraud prevention believe that **simple preventive steps** can significantly increase your financial safety and decrease the chances you will become a target for financial exploitation or fraud.

Quick Tips

1. Use caution utilizing joint accounts as a method of planning for incapacity, avoiding probate, or getting help with bill paying.
2. Don't talk to strangers.
3. Speak to a trusted professional adviser.
4. Protect your financial information.

More details inside!

Senior\$afe Resources

Adult Protective Services

1-800-624-8404 (24/7)

Provides services to protect incapacitated and/or dependent adults.

Legal Services for the Elderly

1-800-750-5353

Provides legal services to socially and economically needy elderly population.

Local Area Agency on Aging

1-877 ELDERS1(353-3771)

Provides answers on aging and access to resources that help older and disabled adults live well in their homes and communities.

Serve Our Seniors Website

www.serveourseniors.org

If you have other questions or concerns, contact:

The Maine Office of Securities

(877) 624-8551 (toll free ME)

or

(207) 624-8551



MAINE COUNCIL FOR
**ELDER ABUSE
PREVENTION**



Senior\$afe

Protect your money and financial accounts from scams, exploitation, and identity theft.

Know who to contact if you need help.



Where do you fall on the "vulnerability scale?"

Are the conditions of your current situation ripe for potential exploitation or fraud? You may be at an increased risk if any of the situations below apply to you.

Vulnerability Factors

- ⇒ Recent loss of a spouse or partner and/or social isolation
- ⇒ Dependent on someone to provide everyday care, transportation, or other services
- ⇒ Financially responsible for an adult child, grandchild, or other family member
- ⇒ Recent change in health
- ⇒ Socially isolated, depressed or lonely
- ⇒ Frequent mistakes in managing finances or feeling overwhelmed in managing household budget or investments
- ⇒ Excessive anxiety about finances.
- ⇒ Running out of money regularly at the end of the month
- ⇒ Willingness to listen to telemarketing or other calls from unknown parties, attend commercial "free lunch" seminars, or investigate work-at-home opportunities or sweepstakes.
- ⇒ Pressure from children, caregivers, or others to share money or change will

PREVENTION STEPS: Take action to protect yourself.

1. Limit phone calls from strangers.
 - **Do not** accept calls from any person you do not know. Use caller ID, and don't answer if you don't recognize the number. Studies show that consumers who answer unsolicited calls are much more likely to be scammed than those who don't.
 - As a precaution, put all your phone numbers on the Do Not Call Registry. Call 888-382-1222 or visit www.donotcall.gov. But don't expect all calls to stop, especially from determined scammers.
 - If necessary, get an unlisted telephone number.
2. **Never** give out personal information to strangers in response to texts, emails, or calls, regardless of who they claim to be or where they claim to be calling from.
3. **Never** wire money to strangers under any circumstances, regardless of who they claim to be or how urgent the situation.
4. Review your financial account statements at least monthly and contact your financial institution, credit card issuer, or other provider immediately if you see unauthorized charges or other issues.
5. Monitor your credit report at least annually. Visit www.annualcreditreport.com or call 877-322-8228. You can get one report from each of the three bureaus free each year.
6. Consider enlisting a trusted family member or reputable bill-paying service. Consult your local Area Agency on Aging for help with routine payments.
7. Use caution when utilizing joint accounts as a method of planning for incapacity or getting help with paying your bills. Both parties are equal owners and have equal access. Talk to your financial institution, attorney, or your local Area Agency on Aging to learn about all of your options for assistance with your finances.
8. Execute a power of attorney only if you can appoint an agent you trust completely and only after consultation with an attorney. Be aware of gifting clauses in power of attorney documents. You can and should limit the power you give your agent. Only grant authority that is absolutely necessary.
9. **Never** convey or quitclaim an interest in real estate without consulting an attorney.
10. Use a document shredder for all discarded paperwork and credit card offers.
11. Remember, there's no such thing as a sure thing. It is illegal to participate in foreign lotteries. You can't win a contest you didn't enter. That windfall you've been promised is a scam. Don't be a victim!

