



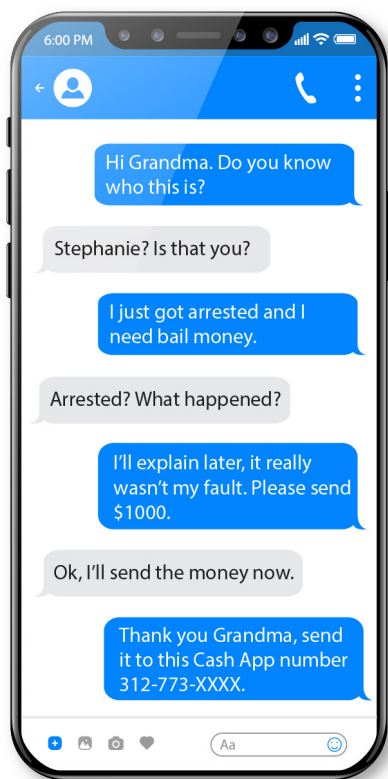
AVOID THE “FAMILY EMERGENCY SCAM”

THE SCAM

In a Family Emergency Scam, you could get a call, text, or email from someone who claims to be a loved one or have info about a crisis involving a family member. The scammer might start by saying, *“Grandma/Grandpa, can you help me? But don’t tell Mom or Dad!”* Impostors may say they saw your family member get into trouble and are trying to help. Typically, they claim that the family member needs money right away for bail, to get home after a car accident, or to pay customs fees to get back into the U.S. after traveling.

BEWARE—there’s a good chance this is an imposter trying to take your money!

THE SCHEME



These scams are made more believable with technology. Voice cloning can be done by scammers who collect audio samples via social media and then use Artificial Intelligence (AI) software to reproduce the person’s tone, pitch, accent, etc. Then, the scammer calls a potential victim using the cloned voice, or even a voice changer, to manipulate the family member into believing there is an emergency requiring financial assistance.

Scammers profit from the Family Emergency Scam by pressuring victims to send funds instantly, using methods that are hard or impossible to trace or reverse.

These methods can be:

- ▶ money transfer apps
- ▶ cryptocurrency
- ▶ wire transfers
- ▶ prepaid gift cards
- ▶ physical courier pick-ups

THE SOLUTION

If someone calls, emails or sends a text message claiming to be a family member or a friend desperate for money, take the following steps.

STOP: Verify the emergency! Don't keep it a secret!



Resist the urge to act immediately, no matter how dramatic the story.



Verify the person's identity by asking questions that a stranger couldn't possibly answer.



Call the family member at a phone number that you know to be genuine.



Check the story out with someone else in your family or circle of friends, even if you've been told to keep it a secret.



Don't wire or transfer money or send a check or money order by overnight delivery or courier.

Report this type of call or any strange unsolicited calls asking you to send or wire money to the **Illinois Attorney General's Senior Citizen Consumer Fraud Helpline** at **1-800-243-5377** or email seniorhelpline@ilag.gov.

Office of the Attorney General Consumer Fraud Hotlines

Chicago
1-800-386-5438

Springfield
1-800-243-0618

Carbondale
1-800-243-0607

Línea Gratuita en Español
1-866-310-8398

www.IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov

Individuals with hearing or speech disabilities can reach us by using the 7-1-1 relay service.

