

Grandchild in Trouble/Distress Call

A criminal contacts an elderly person and pretends to be a grandchild or other family member in trouble with the police. They will tell the older adult that he/she has been arrested by a police service outside of their hometown, possibly another province, an American State or another country and the relative needs bail money. For verification, the older adult is given a phone number to call, which will be answered by someone pretending to be a lawyer or police officer.

The scammer will insist that the victim not contact their parents or relatives as they don't want to get into more trouble. The older adult is then asked to use a money wire service to send money (several thousands of dollars or as much as they can get for bail or credit card information). **Canadian Police agencies do not contact individuals for bail money and do not use money wire services.**

Prevention Tips

- For verification, get the name of the apparent lawyer/police agency and contact them via the number listed in the phone book or directory assistance. **Do not call the number provided by the caller.** Ask them the grandchild's full name, first grade teacher's name, school, last vacation – anything only they would know to be true. AS you seek the facts the criminal will become more desperate and threatening. Hang up.
- If you have call display, write down the caller's number and provide it to your local police agency when reporting the incident.
- Contact family members directly for verification of the whereabouts of the family member in question.
- Never send money through money wire services. Especially to people you do not know personally. The money can be picked up anywhere in the world once it is given a transaction number. The key to this scam is the urgency of the problem and the threat of some harm.