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"Grandparent Scam" - Don't fall prey! Suspects make emotional phone calls asking for money...don't wire money!

An old scam that preys primarily on the elderly, sometimes called the "Grandparent Scam", has found its way back to the area. In recent weeks, the Arcadia Police Department has taken a couple of reports on this type of scam, one of which involved an actual loss of money.

The typical scenario begins with a phone call to an elderly victim. The suspect caller will identify themselves as the victim's grandchild or perhaps ask the victim, "Don't you know who this is?" The suspect will play on the victim's emotions, they may cry or apologize for not calling more often. The suspect will then enter into a sad tale of hardship or say that they have been arrested and are in need of bail. The scammer usually will instruct the victim to go to a local money transfer location and wire or overnight the funds to another location and ask them to keep the event secret from other family members. In some cases, the scammer may have accomplices that will join the suspect during the phone call in attempts to legitimize the request by representing themselves as a police officer or bail agent.

We hope to help prevent this type of crime by providing education and bringing awareness to the topic. No different than in person, always be certain of who you are dealing with when on the telephone. Always verify information and identity. Ask questions that only your actual relative should know. Don't volunteer names or other personal information unless you have initiated the contact. Take the time to verify a legitimate need through other sources such as other relatives or by making independent inquiries yourself, not to a phone number provided by the suspect. Never rush to wire money or send checks via courier. You are likely to lose your cash before you even realize that you have been victimized. These suspects are predators hoping for an emotional response. Let good judgment and reason guide you. Your legitimate loved one would understand and welcome your concern.