



MEDIA RELEASE

WARNING TO YORK REGION RESIDENTS **EMERGENCY/GRANDPARENT SCAMS ON THE RISE**

Investigators with the York Regional Police Financial Crimes Unit are warning the community of an increase in fraud schemes targeting elderly and vulnerable citizens.

York Regional Police have seen an increase in reports from citizens across the region who have reported being a victim of a scam known as the grandparent scam or emergency scam. Since August 4, 2022, 13 incidents have been reported and more than \$50,000 has been lost. Many of these reports have come from residents living in the Towns of Newmarket and Aurora.

These types of scams have risen dramatically in 2022, compared to 2021. Since 2019, the total reported loss for victims in this type of scam is just under \$1 million. Investigators believe there may be more victims in our region that have not yet reported to police.

Emergency scams are often called grandparent scams because fraudsters will prey on a grandparent's bond with their grandchild in an effort to defraud them. Often, criminals will place a telephone call to an elderly person while posing as their grandchild in distress, demanding money to get them out of trouble. In some cases, a second suspect will play the role of a government official, a police officer or a lawyer who then provides instructions on how the victim can deliver the money. These type of frauds may be repeated over the course of days, weeks or even months, as the criminals gain the trust of their victims.

A list of ongoing scams, including grandparent scams, and tips to avoid becoming a victim of fraud, are available at yrp.ca/fraud.

Crime Prevention Tips:

- Never offer personal or financial information to the caller
- Call the grandchild or family member in question, at a phone number you recognize as their own
- Ask the caller personal questions that only your grandchild could answer but an imposter could not
- Verify the story or information with family first
- Press the caller for details if they identify as a government official and verify their information
- Never send money to someone you don't know
- Please take some time and ask yourself: "Could this be a scam?" "Does it make sense?"

We encourage citizens to share fraud prevention tips with friends and family, especially seniors or newcomers to Canada, who are frequently the targeted victims. Employees at financial institutions and courier services are being asked to help identify citizens that may be a target of a grandparent scam and to contact police if something appears unusual and suspicious.

If you have been a victim of a fraud, and have lost money, report the incident promptly to the York Regional Police Financial Crimes Unit either online at yrp.ca/ReportIt or by calling 1-866-876-5423, ext. 6627. To report frauds where no money has been lost, contact the [Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre](http://CanadianAntiFraudCentre.ca) online or by calling 1-888-495-8501.