



Fraud Watch
Network

February 2020 State Scam Alerts

Please consider publishing these alerts in your local publications, and share them on social media, too. AARP Maine will publish the alerts on their website www.aarp.org/me each Tuesday, and then on Facebook and Twitter every #fraudwatch Wednesday. If you have alerts to suggest, please send them to us and we will add them into our scam alert schedule. Questions? Suggestions? Contact Jane Margesson jmargesson@aarp.org or 207-229-5628 (cell).

Week 1 -- Help for Victims of Scams and Fraud

Every day, unsuspecting Americans, from border to border, are victimized by scammers -- typically working with a highly coordinated and sophisticated network of criminals. For these people, the aftermath often includes shame, loss of security and increased isolation. They feel embarrassed and guilty and don't know who to turn to, so more often than not, they don't tell a soul. The AARP Fraud Watch Network is here for you, your friends, and your loved ones who may have experienced this violation. And we're here to tell you *it's not your fault*.

Every week day, trained AARP volunteer fraud fighters are helping victims understand what happened to them, report the crime and start to put their lives back together. If you or someone you know has been the victim of a scam or fraud, call the AARP Fraud Watch Network Helpline at 1-877-908-3360 for support.

Be a fraud fighter! If you can spot a scam, you can stop a scam.

Report scams to local law enforcement. For help from AARP, call 1-877-908-3360 or visit the AARP Fraud Watch Network at www.aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork.

Week 2 - When Cupid's a Con Artist

Along with the rise in dating website use comes a rise in online dating scams. Scammers create fake profiles, build relationships with individuals through the dating site, and then attempt to steal their money and disappear. You can spot a con artist by recognizing a few red flags: they might propose chatting offline or profess their feelings for you before getting to know you. They may offer to visit if you can help cover travel costs, then cancel those plans at the last minute. Looking for love online works great for many people, but scammers lurk, so be cautious of what information you share, and anytime a "love interest" you've never seen in person asks for money, it's more than likely a scam.

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Week 3 - Fear Sells

In the world of successful scams, it turns out fear sells. While some scams promise riches, romance or a new career, most scams today use fear to steal our money. Scammers seek to create a sense of anxiety, anger or embarrassment in hopes we will make decisions in an emotional, vs. logical, state. If you get a scary call, or an email, or a popup message on your computer, hit pause. Give yourself a minute to think logically before taking an action that could result in loss of money or personal information.

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Week 4 - Who are You Really Talking To?

Technology has made our lives easier in many ways, but it has also opened us up to many risks that we don't always recognize. Shopping, banking and getting tech support virtually are becoming the preferred option for many of us, but these conveniences also open doors for impostors. Here are some big red flags: if someone professing to be from a government agency contacts you with an urgent issue you must tend to immediately, it's a scam. If you get a call or a popup message on your device saying you have a problem with your computer and you need to address it immediately, it's a scam. If someone – anyone – says you can pay an obligation with a gift card, it's a scam. Enjoy the conveniences of technology, but stay safe while doing it.

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