



Ontario Provincial Police  
Police provinciale de l'Ontario

## News Release/ Communiqué

**FROM/DE:** Financial Crime Services (FCS)  
Anti-Rackets Branch (ARB)

**DATE:** February 1, 2023

### **THE OPP, RCMP, AND CAFC RAISE AWARENESS AFTER AN INCREASE IN EMERGENCY - GRANDPARENT SCAMS**

**(Ottawa, ON)** - The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre (CAFC) and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) are launching a fraud prevention campaign, February 6 to 10, 2023, to raise awareness about the significant increase in emergency-grandparent scams targeting Canadian seniors.

In 2022, the CAFC received fraud reports totalling a staggering **\$530** million in victim losses. This was nearly a 40 per cent increase from the 2021 unprecedented **\$380** million in losses.

Fraudsters target anyone and everyone, particularly the vulnerable and seniors. In 2022, more than **\$9.2** million was reported lost to emergency scams, according to the CAFC. This was a drastic increase from **\$2.4** million in 2021.

Reports from residents indicate the five provinces most impacted in 2022 were:

- Ontario - over **\$5.4 million** in reported losses;
- Alberta - over **\$1.1 million** in reported losses;
- Quebec - over **\$732,000** in reported losses;
- British Columbia - over **\$322,000** in reported losses;
- Manitoba - over **\$313,000** in reported losses.

It is estimated that only **5-10 per cent** of victims report scams and fraud to the CAFC or law enforcement.

#### **What is an emergency scam?**

Emergency scams, including variations called “grandparent scams”, use urgency and the manipulation of emotions to extort money from victims. In these scams, fraudsters cold call seniors, on landline phones, claiming to be a grandchild, family member, law enforcement officer or lawyer calling on behalf of their loved one. They’ll say that the person’s loved one was involved in an emergency situation, such as a collision, charged by law enforcement, legal peril, being sick or injured, etc. They demand the senior provide payment immediately for supposed bail, legal fees, fines or other amounts “owed” to stop the family member from going to jail or to get them released from custody. This is a scam.

The fraudsters isolate the victims by informing them that there is a court-imposed gag order, and they’re forbidden from discussing the matter. The victims are directed to



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attend their financial institution to withdraw the requested amount in cash. The fraudsters will then send someone to pick it up from the victim's home or have the victim send the money via courier services. There have also been reports of victims paying with cryptocurrency.

### Take action

- Join the RCMP, CAFC and OPP in raising awareness from February 6-10, 2023. The partners will be posting social media tips, bulletins, and various other resources.
- On February 7, 2023 at 1:00pm EST the OPP and CAFC will be hosting a live chat to discuss emergency-grandparent scams alongside an attempted victim who will share their experience. You can view this live chat on the OPP's [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).
- If you fall victim to a fraud or know someone who has, contact your local police service to report the crime and also report it to the CAFC at **1-888-495-8501** or online on the [Fraud Reporting System \(FRS\)](#), even if a financial loss did not occur.
- If you know a senior or have an elderly family member, please reach out to them and have a conversation on what to do if they get a phone call like this and consider coming up with a code word.
- Follow us on social media:
  - RCMP [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)
  - CAFC [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)
  - OPP [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)

### Quotes

"Fraudsters can be very convincing, whether using advanced techniques with new technology or going back to basics with just a script and a phone. While law enforcement and partners continue to work together to investigate and stop these criminals, we ask for the public's help in connecting with the seniors in their lives, warning them about these scams and encouraging them to report any incidents. This one conversation could be life changing."

Chris Lynam, Director General, Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre and National Cybercrime Coordination Centre

"Fraudsters prey on our emotions and our caring nature. By falsely claiming to be a loved one in trouble, scammers exploit our fears and defraud our seniors out of thousands of dollars everyday across this province. I encourage everyone to take a few minutes to educate themselves and the seniors in their family about grandparent scams. The best protection against this type of fraud is awareness and education."



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Dominic Chong, Detective Superintendent, Director of Financial Crime Services, Anti-Rackets Branch & Serious Fraud Office, Ontario Provincial Police

### Related links

- [Emergency Scams](#)
- [Royal Canadian Mount Police](#)
- [Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre](#)
- [Ontario Provincial Police](#)

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### Contact Information

#### Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre

[media@antifraudcentre.ca](mailto:media@antifraudcentre.ca)

#### Royal Canadian Mounted Police

[RCMP.HQMediaRelations-DGRelationsmedias.GRC@rcmp-grc.gc.ca](mailto:RCMP.HQMediaRelations-DGRelationsmedias.GRC@rcmp-grc.gc.ca)

#### Ontario Provincial Police

D/Cst. John Armit, Anti-Rackets Branch (ARB)

Tel : 613-299-8543

[John.armit@opp.ca](mailto:John.armit@opp.ca)