



December 2017 Fraud Prevention Fact

This month's SMP (Senior Medicare Patrol) Fraud Fact addresses the use of telephones to scam you out of money. These scam artists can use both your cell phones and your land lines.

One pervasive scam deals with the IRS. There are different versions, but all of them tell you that you owe the Internal Revenue Service money. You are far behind, and they are getting ready to send some police agency to serve you with an arrest warrant. However, you can stop this action right now by either buying some prepaid cards at Wal-Mart or giving the caller your bank account number. These guys are scam artists. They will make the call sound urgent. They can use something called "spoofing" to make your caller ID tell you the phone number is the IRS. Don't be fooled.

Another common phone scam is the grandparent scam. The caller tells you that he is with your grandchild and needs a large sum for bail money to get out of jail. A grandchild impersonator may even get on the phone and beg you to send money, but not tell Mom or Dad. These guys are pros. They know how to pull your heartstrings. Do NOT do it. Call your daughter, son or grandchild. Verify the story. Don't fall for the scam.

Police reported another scam where the caller says they are from the police department, and you have a federal warrant. They tell you to buy pre-paid gift cards to pay your fine and then threaten you with jail. Police will NOT ask you to purchase a pre-paid gift card to pay for your fines.

We at the Missouri SMP are always trying to alert you to scams. You cannot eliminate these calls, but you can reduce unwanted telemarketing calls by signing your cell phone and landlines up on the Missouri Attorney General's no-call list. It's free. The number to call is 866-No Call 1 or (866-662-2551). As always, report suspected Medicare fraud to the Missouri SMP at (888) 515-6565. SMPs are funded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living, Administration on Aging.