

A Checklist to Help You Protect Those You Care About from Financial Abuse

How can I tell if someone is being financially abused? Because financial abuse does not involve any physical abuse, you have to look for changes in the older person's lifestyle and finances.

What To Look For:

- A large amount out of their bank or other cash accounts or a large check written to someone you do not know.
- Numerous withdrawals of smaller amounts.
- Denial of credit for no apparent reason
- Changing power of attorney or the beneficiaries on insurance or investment accounts.
- Bouncing checks, unable to pay for medications, or bills going unpaid when there should be enough money in the account.
- IRS notice that more than one tax return was filed in the senior's name
- Unnecessary home repairs—having new siding put on the house or the driveway repaved.
- Becoming close with a much younger person or *inappropriate* person.
- Caregiver who becomes overly interested in the finances
- The senior suddenly appears confused, unkempt, and afraid.

Next Steps for Victims and For More Help

- Contact the Eldercare Locator, a public service of the U.S. Administration on Aging.
- The Eldercare Locator links those who need assistance with state and local area agencies on aging and community-based organizations that serve older adults and their caregivers.
- Speak to an Eldercare Locator information specialist by calling toll-free at 800-677-1116 weekdays, 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. (ET). Spanish-speaking information specialists are available.

Don't Let the Paperwork Get You

- Shred all unused credit card applications, medical and financial records.
- Don't leave mail in your mailbox for the carrier to pick up. (This is an invitation to have your bank and credit card numbers stolen.)

Reduce the risk! Post this checklist near the door & phone:

- Don't** let a person you don't know into your home.
 - Don't** have work done on your home without getting written estimates from at least three reputable contractors.
 - Don't** give out your Social Security, credit card or bank account numbers over the phone.
- Review your credit card and bank statements every month.
 - Have the bank send copies of your statements to a trusted adult child or financial manager. (Two sets of eyes are better than one.)

3 Steps to Take for Victims of Telemarketing Fraud

- 1** Report suspicious activity immediately. Cancel credit cards linked to your account and reset your personal identification number.
- 2** For legal services, contact Eldercare. Find your local office by calling toll-free 1-800-677-1116 weekdays, 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- 3** Sign up for the National "Do Not Call" Registry to prevent telemarketers from calling you. Remember, charities, political organizations and surveys are excluded from the "Do Not Call List". Register at www.donotcall.gov or Call 888-382-1222, TTY 866-290-4326.

Help educate others about telemarketing fraud. Share your experience and help prevent others from becoming victims.



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