

# It's much more common than we think.

**Senior financial exploitation or fraud** is the illegal or improper use of a senior's resources for another's profit or advantage.

- » **Exploitation** usually involves someone the senior knows, such as a family member or caregiver.
- » **Fraud** is usually perpetrated by a stranger, such as a telemarketer or investment promoter.

**The key to protecting yourself is information and protective action.** Use this guide to help spot red flags of potential exploitation and fraud early on so that you can protect yourself. If you have been victimized, remember it is never too late to seek help!

Experts in elder fraud prevention believe that **simple preventive steps** can significantly increase your financial safety and decrease the chances you will become a target for financial exploitation or fraud.

## Safe Tips

1. Use caution utilizing joint accounts as a method of planning for incapacity, avoiding probate, or getting help with bill paying.
2. Don't talk to strangers.
3. Speak to a trusted professional adviser.
4. Protect your financial information.

**More details inside!**



## SeniorSafe Resources

911

Report immediate, life-threatening danger

### Adult Protective Services

800.490.8505 or [aging.pa.gov](http://aging.pa.gov)

Protects older adults from abuse and exploitation through investigation and intervention

### PA Department of Banking and Securities

800.PA.BANKS or [dobs.pa.gov](http://dobs.pa.gov)

Answers questions about financial transactions and handles consumer complaints

### PA Attorney General

866.623.2137 or [attorneygeneral.gov](http://attorneygeneral.gov)

Investigates criminal behavior

### Senior Law

877.727.7529

Provides legal services for the elderly

### United Way

Call 211 or [211.org](http://211.org)

Connects callers to local health and human services

### Serve Our Seniors

[serveourseniors.org](http://serveourseniors.org)

Provides nationwide resources for seniors



Connect ... Learn ... Contact



# SeniorSafe

Protect your money and accounts from **scams, exploitation, and identity theft.**



Who can you contact for help?



# Where do you fall on the “vulnerability scale”?

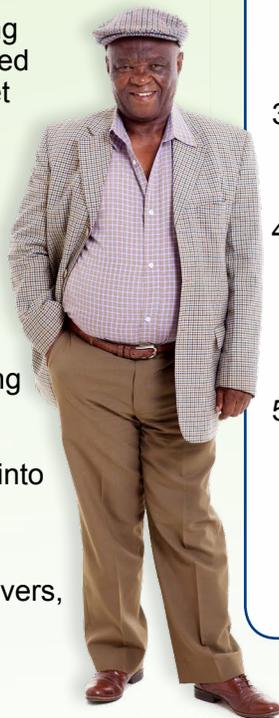
Could you become a victim of potential **exploitation** or **fraud**?



You may be at an increased risk if any of the situations below apply to you.

## Vulnerability Factors

- Recent loss of a spouse or partner
- Social isolation
- Dependent on someone to provide everyday care, transportation, or other services
- Financially responsible for an adult child, grandchild, or other family member
- Recent change in health
- Frequent mistakes in managing finances or feeling overwhelmed in managing household budget or investments
- Worrying too much about finances
- Running out of money regularly at the end of the month
- Willing to listen to telemarketing or other calls from unknown parties, attend commercial “free lunch” seminars, or look into work-at-home opportunities or sweepstakes
- Pressure from children, caregivers, or others to share money or change will



## Prevention Steps: Take action to protect yourself



1. Limit phone calls from strangers.
  - Do not accept calls from any person you do not know. Use caller ID, and do not answer an unknown number. Studies show that consumers who answer unsolicited calls are much more likely to be scammed than those who ignore these calls.
  - As a precaution, put all your phone numbers on the **Do Not Call Registry**. Call **888.382.1222** or visit **donotcall.gov**. **Warning:** determined scammers will still try to reach you.
  - If necessary, get an unlisted telephone number.
2. Never give out personal information to strangers in response to texts, emails, or calls, regardless of who they claim to be or who they claim as their employer.
3. Never wire money to strangers under any circumstances, regardless of who they claim to be or how urgent they claim the situation.
4. Review your financial account statements at least monthly and contact your financial institution, credit card issuer, or other provider immediately if you see unauthorized charges or other issues.
5. Monitor your credit report at least annually. Visit **annualcreditreport.com** or call **877.322.8228**. You can get one report from each of the three bureaus free each year.
6. Consider enlisting a trusted family member or reputable bill-paying service. Consult your local Area Agency on Aging for help with routine payments.
7. Use caution when utilizing joint accounts as a method of planning for incapacity or getting help with paying your bills. You and the other person are equal owners and have equal access. Talk to your financial institution, attorney, or your local Area Agency on Aging to learn about all of your options for assistance with your finances.
8. Execute a power of attorney only if you can appoint an agent you trust completely and only after consultation with an attorney. Be aware of gifting clauses in power of attorney documents. You can and should limit the power you give your agent. Only grant authority that is absolutely necessary.
9. Never convey or quitclaim an interest in real estate without consulting an attorney.
10. Use a document shredder for all discarded paperwork and credit card offers.
11. **Don't be a victim!**

