

Senior**ALERT**



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
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FIVE WARNING SIGNS OF A SCAM

IT IS DISHEARTENING to hear nearly every day about a scam that has cheated a senior Texan out of his or her hard-earned life savings. These scams take every imaginable form, and the stories invented by con artists get smoother and more persuasive all the time. But we see the same general patterns over and over. Here is a list of five familiar warning signs. When in doubt, STOP and check this list. Any one of these red flags should make you think twice and three times about what you are about to do:

- Unsolicited mail or phone call
- A promise that you will get a large sum of money
- Any effort to obtain personal financial information
- You have to PAY money first before you GET money
- You are asked to WIRE money instead of using US Mail

Whether it's mail fraud or telephone fraud, chances are it will begin with an unsolicited contact from a company or organization you never heard of. You do not know who the caller really is. Real lotteries don't call you to say you've won. You don't get grants without applying for them. Real money is hard to get. It doesn't just come to you.

There is NO GOOD REASON to give any caller your bank account, credit card, PIN or Social Security number. And you don't have to pay money up front for any reason before you collect lottery winnings or a loan. The use of wire transfer is to avoid stiff federal mail fraud penalties. Remember that glib con artists can make up very reasonable-sounding and persuasive stories. They may pretend to be government officials or other helpful professionals. Just don't even listen. Instead, focus on the five warning signs. Once you recognize them, if it's a phone call, JUST HANG UP. If it's mail, THROW IT AWAY.

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