

Hang up on imposter scams

By Jim Kreidler, FTC

May 23, 2022

When people encounter scams or bad business practices, they [report them to the FTC](#). And what we've learned is interesting. Young adults report losing money to scammers more often than older people do, but when people [age 70+ had a loss](#), the reported median loss was much higher.

So, during Older Americans Month we're talking about some of the [top scams reported](#) to the FTC by older adults — imposter scams. Imposter scams often begin with a call, text message, or email, or even an alarming pop-up warning on your computer. [The scams take different twists](#) and turns, but the gist is the same: a scammer pretends to be someone you trust to trick you into sending them money or sharing personal information.

Scammers may claim that they're calling from a tech company (think Microsoft or Apple), saying your computer has been hacked. Maybe they say they're from your bank (“unauthorized transfer”), Amazon (“unauthorized purchase”), or even the government (“you're in trouble with the law”). Some scammers say they're a loved one who needs help in some way. In all cases, they want you to pay. Quickly. By gift card or cryptocurrency, so it's hard to get your money back.

If anyone contacts you out of the blue demanding money:

- **Slow down.** Talk to someone you trust before you act.
- **Never pay anyone who demands money by gift card, cryptocurrency, or money transfer.** Nobody legit will ever ask.
- **When in doubt, check with the real agency, person, or company.** But don't use the phone number, email, or website they give you. Look it up yourself.

If you spot an imposter scam, report it to the FTC at [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://www.ftc.gov/whocomplaint). Your report can help the FTC identify and stop scammers. To learn about new scams and how to avoid them, [sign up for our Consumer Alerts](#).