

## **SENIOR SCAMS - Warning Signs**

**Provided by W.R. Marlowe Educational Services  
800-400-4262**

*“Limited Time – Act Immediately”*

Free! • High return, no risk • Too easy credit • Too cheap • Too good = TOO BAD!!!

They called you, or showed up at your door, uninvited –  
especially financial products, home repairs, real estate agents

*“Your (or your group) is Special”*

*“We are Unique”*

A stranger asking for credit card, bank or SSN (even if they have the last few #s)

*“I’ll send a messenger to pick up your check.”*

Won’t give written information

Discourages getting a third party opinion

Winning a contest or sweepstakes you didn’t enter

“Urgent Response” mail sent by bulk mail

1-900 numbers – Unfamiliar area codes

Financial institutions in foreign countries

*“We’ll send you a check/money order – send us some money back”*

A charity you never heard of, including “aid” after a recent, well-publicized tragedy

Dire consequences if you don’t do as instructed

No proof of a license to sell the product offered

Asking you to sign a contract containing blank spaces

No local phone number, address or references

## Protect Yourself

### Generally

- Ask for licenses and check with regulators
- **Use companies that provide free estimates. Get several estimates for every repair job and compare prices and terms.**
- Ask friends/neighbors/family for recommendations; ask for references. Check references.
- **Check the ID of all workmen and inspectors. Make sure they are employed as claimed.**
- Arrange to make payments to contractors in installments and pay the last installment only after the job is completed to your satisfaction.
- **Always get a receipt.**
- Don't feel obligated because you attend a meeting where meals or other freebies are provided.
- **Be wary of strangers "representing" a government agency, charitable entity or deceased relative.**
- Remember that installment payment plans usually charge high interest rates.
- **Don't give personal info or numbers over the phone; don't store them on your phone.**
- Check the details of monthly bills and statements including whether payee has changed.
- **Don't pay to get something you've "won" and don't buy something in order to enter a contest.**
- Don't pay, or call to correct errors on, invoices you don't recognize or remember and don't pay for unordered products sent to you.
- **Don't invest in things you don't understand.**
- 5 words: National Do Not Call Registry – 888-382-1222 ([www.donotcall.gov](http://www.donotcall.gov))
- **Don't sign an uncompleted form or a form you have not read entirely.**
- Get a shredder and use it.
- **Do the paperwork to assure who will handle your finances in case of your incompetence or death.**
- Hang up.
- **Remember the modern "Golden Rule" – you have the money, they want it. That puts you in charge. Take charge of the situation.**

### At Your Home

(Home repair/improvement, investments, insurance, trusts, fundraising, realtors, etc.)

Do not let a stranger into your home when you're alone. If you want to meet with them, make sure a friend or family member is with you.

**Get information such as the address and phone number of the company and the credentials of the sales representative before making a purchase.**

Consider whether you really need and can afford what is being sold. Don't pay with cash!

**Remember that the flashy, impressive-looking product the salesperson has may actually be inferior to those sold in stores. Do not make an immediate purchase decision, no matter how attractive the deal seems. Compare the price of the same product at a local store.**

**Don't assume credibility based on the salesman's connection to your organization or family.**

Refuse "left over" products – they're either stolen or poor quality.

**If you're told your property needs repair, thank them and shut the door.**

**"I just happen to be working in your neighborhood."**

**"I have materials left over from another job."**

**"I need the cash up front."**

**"I have a special offer that's good for today only."**

**"I can help you finance the project."**

**"I want to use your home as a model."**

Refuse to yield to pressure to make a quick decision. Pressure includes incentives to "act now" – i.e., a discount on commissions, escrow fees or closing costs. Eject those who pressure you.

**You have three days to cancel any purchase made in your home.**

### Charities

Stick with the ones you know.

**Let other people support the other 699,997 approved charities in the U.S..**

Make a charitable giving budget and stick to it.

**Don't just hand cash to people without knowing what they'll do with it.**

## Investments

(<http://www.sec.gov/investor/seniors.shtml>)

**At any sales seminar, just ask your questions, listen and leave. Decide at home.**

If you've given your investment advisor trading discretion, read your statements carefully.

**Annuities have two uses – 1) Accumulate funds for retirement 2) If properly designed, to assure a life-time income. Variable and equity-indexed annuities are not appropriate for purchase when nearing or after retirement.**

Annuities, mutual funds, stocks, bonds, certificates of deposit, viaticals, promissory notes-- know what you're doing or don't do it.

**Life insurance is not an investment**

THESE DESIGNATIONS MEAN NOTHING -- Financial Analyst, Financial Adviser (Advisor), Financial Consultant, Financial Planner, Investment Consultant, Wealth Manager

**Regardless of professional designations, will the advisor provide what you need or do they want to convince you that you need what they want to sell? What is your evidence of trustworthiness?**

Letters of Credit and Bank Guarantees are not investments.

## Estate Planning / Trusts

There are good and necessary Trusts.

They are written by attorneys you personally talk to

They are custom written for you and reflect your types of assets, distribution intentions, incompetency plans for yourself and your beneficiaries

Include assistance with funding of the Trust

Cost well over \$1,000.

Have at least 35 pages, 50 for a married couple

Names include "A", "AB", "ABC", "Bypass", "Credit Shelter", "Charitable Remainder", "Living"

**Be careful of anyone who claims to be an "Estate Planner" who isn't an attorney.**

Trusts cannot:

Reduce income taxes

Legally hide your assets from your creditors

Turn your personal expenses into deductible business expenses

Turn your regular income into retirement savings

**Advertising warning signs:**

**Reference to the Constitution / America / loss of "Rights / Scripture**

**Utilization of "secret" information**

**Naming names – Kennedy, Rockefeller, et al**

**Justification by quoting court cases (usually overturned cases)**

***"Your usual advisors don't understand these sophisticated documents"***

**Trust names – "Constitutional", "Pure", "Common Law", "Asset Protection"**

## Healthcare

**A cure for cancer, diabetes, arthritis, obesity or aging will show up in the news before it shows up in an advertising campaign.**

Why would you trust a solicitor for your future drug needs? Say no to enrolling in their drug plan.

**Social Security and Medicare do not make house calls and don't sell anything.**

**Medicare drug plan companies cannot come to your door uninvited**

Free medical supplies or equipment

Ask for references.

**What does your common sense say to you about:**

**You can buy medical coverage 10% cheaper than anywhere else, with no medical exam (guaranteed acceptance), but since you're going to join their organization, they don't need a license to sell it to you.**

Count your pills upon receiving them.

## Dental

**You get what you pay for**

**Discount dentures?**

**Dental work without a dentist?**

**The price of dentures always includes adjustments**

**Skip the Dental Club and its up-front payment until discussing it with member dentists**

## Hearing Aids

Hearing enhancers are not hearing aids

Free-lance hearing aid service providers – talk to previous clients

Start with your physician; get a referral

Be sensitive to the professionalism of the test

Find out what the repair process is

## Travel / Vacation Club /Timeshares

**Free trip – a prize, an incentive; regardless, to get it you have to 1) attend a seminar OR 2) pay a fee OR 3) join the club first OR any combination of 1), 2) and 3).**

Ask what hotels they use. Call the hotels.

**Ask for their office address. Visit their office.**

Get the rules in writing and read them.

**Get information about maintenance fees, club dues & all-inclusive fees in writing.**

Who are you dealing with? "Ramada Plaza Resorts" is not Ramada Inn.

**There is almost no market for used timeshares. Might be a way to get one cheap**

## Internet

**An Internet site doesn't guarantee legitimacy. Internet today, gone tomorrow.**

**Ask family and friends about good sites.**

Only use secure servers to process payments.

**Use your credit card, not your debit card, when you purchase merchandise over the Internet. Your credit card has protections your debit card doesn't.**

Review the privacy policies of web pages you visit and subscribe to.

**Most auction sites have no responsibility if you pay for an item and never receive it or receive an item of substandard quality.**

Do not click on a link in an e-mail unless you know the sender personally

**Use firewall, anti-virus and spy/adware protection.**

Make sure your minors know how to use the Internet safely.

WWW.NETSMARTZ411.ORG

[WWW.GETNETWISE.ORG](http://WWW.GETNETWISE.ORG)

Keep their computer where you can watch the screen