Just Hang Up!

The Best Way to Avoid Telephone Scams Is Also the Easiest.

Every day, seniors throughout Illinois fall prey to smooth-talking con artists who call them up and tell all kinds of convincing stories to get their money.

The Office of the Illinois Attorney General wants you to know that it's shrewd, not rude, to hang up the phone when a stranger asks you to send them money or give out your personal information.

The following are some common warning signs of telephone scams. If you spot any of these signs while on the phone, don't think twice:

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THEY CONTACT YOU. When you look up the number of a reputable business on your own and call to place an order, you have a good idea who's on the other end of the deal. But when the tables are turned and someone calls you, you have no way of knowing who the person really is, where they're calling from, or what they want from you. *Just Hang Up!*

THEY WANT YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION. Any time a stranger asks you for your bank account number, Social Security number, or other sensitive information, you should be on high alert. This is a sure sign of identity theft. ***Never*** give personal or financial information to someone you do not know. *Just Hang Up!*

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THEY PROMISE A BIG AWARD. Scammers try to lure you in with promises of unexpected riches such as a large sum of money, a vacation, or a "get rich quick" investment scheme. Remember: If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. *Just Hang Up!*

YOU MUST PAY THEM FIRST. It is illegal for someone to require an up-front payment to claim a lottery or sweepstakes prize. Scammers will often tell you that you must wire money out of state, or even out of the country, to obtain your winnings. ***Never*** wire money to a stranger. Wiring money is just like sending cash—scammers will get the money quickly, and you won't get it back. *Just Hang Up!*

Consider placing your phone number on the **National Do Not Call Registry**, if you haven't already done so. This will block most unwanted telemarketing calls. So, once your number is on the registry, you'll know that any telemarketer who does call you is probably up to no good. You can register your home phone or cell phone online at www.donotcall.gov or by calling **1-888-382-1222 (TTY: 1-866-290-4236)** from the phone number you wish to register.

If you've fallen victim to or want to report a telephone scam, please contact the **Illinois Attorney General's Consumer Fraud Hotline** at 1-800-386-5438 (TTY: 1-800-964-3013) or **Senior Fraud Helpline** at 1-800-243-5377 (TTY: 1-800-964-3013).

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