

# “Don’t be a victim of a Scam”

**This newsletter focuses on an issue of growing importance to the public in general and older citizens in particular: How can you avoid becoming the victim of a scam artist? Below are two most common scams in the State of Michigan.**

## THE “PIGEON DROP” SCAM

One scam often used by scam artists is known as the “Pigeon Drop”. Here’s one account of how one elderly woman lost \$5,000 to this scam.

The con started when the senior was approached in the parking lot of a grocery store by a woman about 40 years old who claimed to have found a wallet containing \$100,000.

This woman asked the victim if the wallet belonged to her. As the two were talking, they were approached by another woman wearing a white nurse’s uniform (scam artists usually work in teams during pigeon drops).

After determining that the nurse wasn’t the wallet’s owner, the woman said that she was going to take the money to a friend who was a banker.

All three women got into the victim’s car and drove to the bank in question. The offender went in and out of the bank a couple of times, and eventually told the victim she needed some “good faith” money to secure the found money, which they will split among themselves later.

The victim withdrew \$2,000 from her bank account and cashed a money order for \$3,000. The scam artists finally separated the victim from the \$5,000 by telling her that she needed to go into bank to sign some papers.

The victim entered the bank, where employees didn’t know anything about the other woman. By the time the victim exited the bank, the other two women had left the area with her \$5,000.

**CAUTION**

**DON’T  
BE A  
VICTIM**

• **OVER**

# **BOGUS REPAIRMEN INVADE HOMES OF SENIOR CITIZENS**

In the phony home improvement scam, the con artist will pose as a contractor and offer to do home repairs at extra low rates. They then use one of several ways to rip off the victim. They can demand a large down payment, then never return to do the work. They can find a reason to enter the home and steal personal belongings, including any cash they might find.

The following is an account of two separate attempts to scam elderly women by pretending to be contractors. Fortunately, both women came out of the scams unscathed and without a loss of property.

The scam began when a man knocked on the back door of one victim's apartment and told her he was taking measurements to install new doors in the building.

The woman let the man into her apartment, then left to get assistance from a neighbor. When she returned to her apartment, she saw a second man exiting her bedroom. The woman told police nothing was missing from her apartment. The men said they would return later.

These scams are called ruse-entry scams because the perpetrators use a ruse, such as needing to measure doors, to gain entry. Once inside, they work as a team, with one person ransacking the residence while the other distracts the victim.

The second would-be victim told police that two men arrived at her house and said they were from a tree-trimming service.

The woman let the men inside. But when she realized it was a scam, they left without taking any items or money. Police stated that the onset of spring is usually a prime time for such scams as home improvement projects.

**This information was provided by AARP.**

## **Free Legal Advice for Michigan Seniors**

**The Legal Hotline for Michigan Seniors**

**115 W. Allegan St., Ste. 720**

**Lansing, Michigan 48933**

**(800) 347-5297 or (517) 372-5959**

**E-mail: [lhom@sojourn.com](mailto:lhom@sojourn.com)**

**This newsletter is provided to Mott Community College campus by the Public Safety Department.**

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