



On The Beat – Fraud prevention – *By Botany Constable Stewart Green*



When it comes to perceptions about the levels of crime it is often the elderly who have the greatest fear of crime. Interestingly it is the elderly who are least likely to become the victims of crime. However there are some crimes where the elderly are vulnerable.

Fraud is something that the elderly can be susceptible to and are targeted by both criminals in NZ and overseas.

Most scams involve the scammer contacting the victims by phone and the scams are always evolving, so it's impossible to warn people about every scam that is taking place.

My general rule of thumb is that if you receive a call that you were not expecting be very careful what information you give over the phone and if you are in any doubt about the authenticity of the caller hang up.

Resent scams that we have encountered are similar to the one below -

The callers asked the victims to download software and enter in details, including their bank account details, which were then cleared out of money and transferred to an overseas bank account.

For years, banks and Police have been telling people to never give their account details, including their PIN number to anyone, no matter how insistent the caller may be. Nevertheless, many elderly people do so, and as a consequence they lose all their money.

Frauds of this nature - particularly those involving criminals from overseas invariably result in the money never being recovered. This makes prevention even more important. If you have elderly family members who may be susceptible to this kind of crime please have a conversation with them about never giving their account details, including their PIN number to anyone, no matter how insistent the caller may be.

Elderly people are often coerced into engaging the services of bogus tree cutters knocking door to door. The tree cutter will often pressure an elderly person into paying them, often up front, for cutting trees that usually don't need to be cut. Sometimes the job is performed, often it's not. Sometimes the tree cutter will demand more money, until the victim has paid out literally hundreds of dollars for a job that wasn't required in the first place. If you are approached by a tree cutter looking for work our advice is to politely send them on their way.

The key to avoiding victimisation is prevention.

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