

# Protect yourself and your financial accounts from scams, exploitation, and identity theft

- Senior financial exploitation and fraud is the illegal or improper use of a senior's resources for another's profit or advantage.
- Exploitation usually involves someone the senior knows, such as a family member or caregiver.
- Fraud is usually perpetrated by a stranger, such as a telemarketer or investment promoter.

## Take Preventive Action to Protect Yourself:



Put all your phone numbers on the **DO NOT CALL LIST** by **calling 1-888-382-1222** or by visiting **www.donotcall.gov**. Don't expect all calls to stop, especially from determined scammers. If necessary, get an unlisted telephone number. Use Caller ID and don't accept calls from any person you don't recognize the phone number for.

**NEVER** convey or quitclaim an interest in real estate without consulting an attorney.

**NEVER** give out personal information to strangers in response to texts, emails, or calls regardless of who they claim to be or where they claim to be calling from.

**Review your financial information regularly.** Check your account statements at least monthly. If you see unauthorized charges or other issues, contact the financial institution, credit card issuer or other financial provider. Review your credit report at least annually by visiting **www.annualcreditreport.com** or by **calling 1-877-322-8228**.

**Use a document shredder** for all discarded paperwork and credit card offers.



**Consider enlisting a trusted family member or a reputable bill-paying service.** Consult your local Area Agency on Aging for help with routine payments.

**Don't be a victim of foreign lottery fraud.** That windfall you've been promised is a scam.

**Use caution when utilizing joint accounts** as a method of planning for incapacity or getting help with paying your bills. Both parties are equal owners and have equal access. Talk to your financial institution, attorney or your local Area Agency on Aging to learn about all of your options for assistance with your finances.

**Execute a power of attorney only after speaking with your attorney and only if you can trust the appointed agent completely.** Limit your agent's authority to what is absolutely necessary, and be aware of gift clauses.

**NEVER** wire money to strangers under any circumstances regardless of who they claim to be or how urgent the situation is.

# Vulnerability Factors

*You may be at an increased risk if any of the situations apply to you:*

- 1 Recent loss of a spouse or partner and / or social isolation
- 2 Dependent on someone to provide everyday care, transportation or other services
- 3 Financially responsible for an adult child, grandchild, or other family member
- 4 Recent change in health, or depression
- 5 Frequent mistakes in managing finances or feeling overwhelmed in managing household budget or investments
- 6 Excessive anxiety about finances, running out of money regularly at the end of the month
- 7 Willingness to listen to telemarketing or other calls from unknown parties
- 8 Willingness to attend commercial “free lunch” seminars, or investigate work-at-home or other business opportunities

## Need assistance? Don't hesitate to contact:

### Office of Aging and Disability Services Adult Protective Services

*Provides services to protect incapacitated and/or dependent adults.*

**1-800-624-8404**

### Legal Services for the Elderly

*Provides free, high quality legal services to Maine's socially and economically needy elderly age 60 and over.*

**1-800-750-5353**

### Local Area Agency on Aging

*Provides answers on aging and access to resources that help older and disabled adults live well in their homes and communities.*

**1-800-353-3771**