

Panic and Crisis Frauds

Creating an artificial crises has been a staple of military and police training since well before the first world war. The idea is to create an environment of extreme stress or panic and have the candidate or team work through the problem under threat of some dire consequence. A successful outcome will see an individual or team curb their emotional and physical reactions to focus in on solving the problem at hand in a well throughout and conscious manner. Fraudsters have taken a page from this type of training and in recent years have started to target unsuspecting persons. Panicked phone calls saying a loved one has been in an accident or has been arrested on serious charges are typical. In extreme cases you may hear someone scream in the background or say something in an excited state. The immediate stress and panic you feel may trick you into believing the voice you just heard is that of a loved one. From there the fraudsters ask for money for medical bills, lawyer fees or bail. The only way to avoid this type of fraud is to perhaps never pick up a phone again but if that's not an option look for these red flags:

- You are not able to speak with your loved one
- Money is needed immediately and transferred via an unusual method or to a third party email
- Caller advises you not to contact anyone else until the transaction is complete
- They have limited information on your loved one
- Will not allow you to hang up and call back.

If you believe your loved one has been hurt or detained while visiting a foreign country, contact the RCMP or Foreign affairs Canada. Both agencies have liaison officers in countries all over the world who can assist in times of crisis. Whatever you do, don't send money until you've had a conversation with Police, Foreign Affairs and or family members.

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