

EDSO issues phone scam warning

El Dorado County Sheriff's Office is warning the community of telephone fraud scams targeting the elderly.

The scam operates as follows: An unknown male suspect telephone™s an elderly victim and states, "Gramps or Grandma, I need help. I got into some trouble (or an auto accident) in Canada. I need bail money." The victims usually reply, "Is this (name of grandchild the caller™s voice resembles)." The caller responds, "Yes, this is (name victim provided)."

The suspect caller then requests the elderly victim wire transfer him money so he can get bailed out of jail. The suspect caller asks the elderly victim to keep this a "secret" because he is so embarrassed. The suspect caller is usually very emotional when speaking with the elderly victims. The victims are told to wire the "bail money" via MoneyGram to Canada (Vancouver, Toronto or Montreal). Typical dollar amounts wired to Canada by the victims are usually in \$5,000 increments.

On some occasions, the suspect will re-contact the elderly victim advising him/her that he received the "bail money" but now needs additional monies wired for release of his passport.

In some instances, the victim™s caller ID feature has captured the suspect caller™s telephone number. Investigators are trying to follow up on these phone numbers but many appear to be originating from pre-paid wireless telephones. Investigations are continuing. The purpose of this notice is to alert the elderly citizenry of this particular devious scam.