

Con artists have snowbirds in their sights

By Sid Kirchheimer, AARP Bulletin

Snowbird season kicks off this month, as millions of retirees migrate to warm-temperature states like Florida and Arizona. But while escaping the cold, they also weather more risks—at both locales.

“There’s a definite increase in scams against snowbirds, many by organized outfits that specifically focus on older, seasonal residents,” says Joe Roubicek, who spent 30 years investigating scams as a Fort Lauderdale police detective and investigator for the Florida State Attorney’s Office.

Enlist a “what if” contact. Roubicek suggests making a list of what could possibly go wrong—and whom you would call when it does. “What if you’re in an accident, are robbed at a rest stop or need medication?” he asks.

“The biggest mistake made by snowbirds is not proactively arranging for a back-home contact to help in emergencies.” Share your designee’s contact information with the local police department, plus your doctors, pharmacy and family members. To reduce the chance that you’ll need to call on the person, pack copies of prescriptions, important medical records and financial account numbers (all personal data should be stored in a safe place).

Read the whole story