Hello, Grandma?

You get a phone call from your grandson who sounds very upset:

Grandma, I’m in jail!

I was in a crash and police think I had alcohol, but it was just cough medicine. I am so embarrassed. Please don’t call Mom and Dad. Could you wire bail money to my lawyer?

And, please, don’t tell anyone!

One clear sign of a scam is the request to wire money. Any time a stranger on the phone asks you to wire money, it’s a con—even when someone claims to be family.

Still worried? Hang up and call your grandson. Chances are, he’s not in jail. You can also ask the caller for the name and location of the jail from which they are calling. Then look up the number yourself and call to see if your loved one is there.

If you have been victimized, report it to your local law enforcement agency. According to the FBI, this scam also happens by e-mail. If you receive an e-mail asking for money to be wired for a relative, always verify information directly with your family before responding.

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