

# Senior Safety: How to Prevent Fraud & Scams Effectively



Have you ever received a call from an unknown number, and no one is on the other end when you pick up? Chances are you were on the wrong end of a phishing scam.

We've all heard of fraud and scams. Some of us have been victims, and most of us have been targeted. Today, there are countless ways to have your identity, private information, or personal belongings stolen, and it can become overwhelming not knowing who or what to trust. The most common scams include emergency/loved one scams, identity theft, investment scams, romance scams, and phishing. While attempting to dodge various scams, there are still the threats of car and wallet theft.

## Scam vs. Fraud

**Scam:** the act of attempting to deceive or trick someone, often with the intent to gain something of value, but it doesn't necessarily mean the scam was successful (i.e. A phishing email that asks for your bank account information is a scam, but it's not fraud until someone uses the information to steal money).

**Fraud:** the act of deceiving someone for personal or financial gain, and it is considered a crime. It involves the illegal or dishonest acquisition of something of value, and it is only

considered fraud when the scam is successful (i.e., if someone uses your stolen credit card information to make unauthorized purchases, that is fraud).

It's important to note that scams can lead to fraud, but not all scams end in fraud.

All Canadians are at risk of scams; in 2023, over [60,000 Canadians reported being targeted by a scam, resulting in over \\$578 million in losses to fraud and cybercrime](#), according to the [Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre \(CAFC\)](#). Unfortunately, approximately 67 percent of those were victims of fraud. Seniors are disproportionately more likely to be victims due to lack of knowledge, especially online.

According to a study done by Pew Research Center, 67 percent of seniors surf the internet regularly, but [only 26 percent](#) feel very confident using computers and smartphones. This lack of confidence makes seniors the perfect target for even easy-to-spot scams.

At Royal Heights, it's important to us for our residents to be safe and informed. That's why we host a Senior Fraud Prevention Awareness Seminar to help protect against scams, fraud, and identity theft. This year, we had Martin Franssen from the *Older Adults Support & Investigate Service Unit* with [Durham Regional Police](#). **Here are some takeaways from the event:**