

September 2023

A Safer Naper --- Senior Safety

According to recent Census Bureau data, 13.3% of Naperville's population is made up of senior citizens. In this month's Safer Naper campaign, the Naperville Police Department focuses on some of the many programs and resources available for older adults as well as education on common phone and email scams targeting seniors, domestic violence assistance and warning signs, elder abuse/neglect, and mental health and wellness resources for older adults.

SECTION 1 – Programs

AARP Smart Driver: The Naperville Police Department is partnering with AARP to offer a program entitled "Smart Driver." This classroom driver refresher course, designed for drivers age 50 and older, has assisted millions of mature drivers to stay safe. The objective of the course is to help participants drive safer and therefore keep their licenses longer. Topics include:

- Understanding the normal effects of aging on driving and practical ways to compensate for those changes
- Driving strategies for the mature driver
- Identifying the most common crash situations and how to avoid them
- An update on the rules of the road, vehicle accessories, and local traffic hazards.

Classes will be held on Nov. 8 & 9, 2022 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Naperville Police Department. To register, call (630) 420-8479 or click the link below.

[Register for Smart Driver](#)

Fastrack: The Naperville Police Department has combined "tried and true" radio technology with specially trained response team members to build an effective, life-saving program to locate high risk persons who have a history of wandering. Called Fastrack, this program uses Care Trak International equipment and has proven itself to be reliable, responsive, practical and affordable.

Clients who are part of the Fastrack Program wear a personalized transmitter on their wrist or ankle that emits a continual, silent tracking signal assigned just to them. When caregivers notify the Naperville Police Department that a client is missing, a search and rescue team responds and begins tracking the client with a hand-held, directional response system targeted at the client's specific frequency.

[Learn more about Fastrack](#)

Caring Hands: The Caring Hands program allows residents to voluntarily provide Naperville's first responders with critical information about themselves or loved ones with developmental, cognitive, mental, medical and/or physical disabilities who may require special assistance during an emergency or non-emergency situation. Information provided could include methods of communication, sensory and medical issues as well as approach and de-escalation techniques.

[Learn more about Caring Hands](#)

SECTION 2 – Scams

According to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), people between the ages of 60-69 lost more money to fraud in 2022 (a total of \$836 million) than any other age group. While gift cards are still a preferred payment method for scammers, nationally and locally there has been an increase in reports of scams involving cryptocurrency for payment as well as scams involving artificial intelligence.

Signs of a Scam

While the methods often change, there are some common signs of a scam that can help you identify and avoid one.

1. Scammers **PRETEND** to be from an organization you know. Scammers often pretend to be contacting you on behalf of the government. They might use a real name, like the FTC, Social Security Administration, IRS, or Medicare, or make up a name that sounds official. Some pretend to be from a business you know, like a utility company, a tech company, or even a charity asking for donations. They use technology to change the phone number that appears on your caller ID. So, the name and number you see might not be real.
2. Scammers say there's a **PROBLEM** or a **PRIZE**. They might say you're in trouble with the government. Or you owe money. Or someone in your family had an emergency. Or that there's a virus on your computer. Some scammers say there's a problem with one of your accounts and that you need to verify some information. Others will lie and say you won money in a lottery or sweepstakes but have to pay a fee to get it.
3. Scammers **PRESSURE** you to act immediately. Scammers want you to act before you have time to think. If you're on the phone, they might tell you not to hang up so you can't check out their story. They might threaten to arrest you, sue you, take away your driver's or business license, or deport you. They might say your computer is about to be corrupted.
4. Scammers tell you to **PAY** in a specific way. They often insist that you can only pay by using cryptocurrency, wiring money through a company like MoneyGram or Western Union, using a payment app, or putting money on a gift card and then giving them the numbers on the back of the card. Some will send you a check (that will later turn out to be fake), then tell you to deposit it and send them money.

How to Avoid a Scam

- **Block unwanted calls and text messages.** Take steps to block unwanted calls and to filter unwanted text messages.
- **Don't give your personal or financial information in response to a request that you didn't expect.** Honest organizations won't call, email, or text to ask for your personal information, like your Social Security, bank account, or credit card numbers. If you get an email or text message from a company you do business with and you think it's real, it's still best not to click on any links. Instead, contact them using a website you know is trustworthy. Or look up their phone number. Don't call a number they gave you or the number from your caller ID.
- **Resist the pressure to act immediately.** Honest businesses will give you time to make a decision. Anyone who pressures you to pay or give them your personal information is a scammer.

- **Know how scammers tell you to pay.** Never pay someone who insists that you can only pay with cryptocurrency, a wire transfer service like Western Union or MoneyGram, a payment app, or a gift card. And never deposit a check and send money back to someone.
- **Stop and talk to someone you trust.** Before you do anything else, tell someone — a friend, a family member, a neighbor — what happened. Talking about it could help you realize it's a scam.

[Source: [FTC](#)]

SECTION 3 – Elder Abuse, Neglect and Domestic Violence

Elder Abuse and Neglect: During fiscal year 2022, the Adult Protective Services program received a total of 19,937 reports of suspected abuse, neglect, self-neglect, and exploitation. Elder abuse is an underreported crime that can happen in many places, including the older person's home, a family member's house, an assisted living facility, or a nursing home. The mistreatment of older adults can be by family members, strangers, health care providers, caregivers, or friends. This abuse can take many forms such as physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, financial exploitation, abandonment or neglect.

It can be difficult to identify this abuse due to variety of reasons; oftentimes, the perpetrator is somebody that the older adult is related to or reliant on for care, which can make them reluctant to come forward. Older adults may be isolated or struggle with a mental impairment such as Alzheimer's or Dementia.

Recognizing some of the many signs of abuse is a critical step in protecting our seniors. Some of the warning signs may include:

- Depression, confusion, or being withdrawn
- Being isolated from friends and family
- Having unexplained bruises, burns, or scars
- Having bed sores or other preventable conditions
- Recent changes in banking or spending patterns
- Appearing dirty, underfed, dehydrated, over- or undermedicated, or not receiving needed care for medical problems

Anyone can make a report to Adult Protective Services to report suspected abuse/neglect of senior citizens. Your information is confidential by law and you don't have to have "hard evidence" or police involvement to make a report. The 24/7 hotline is 866-800-1409.

Here's who is eligible to receive Adult Protective Services' assistance:

- Any senior citizen (age 60+)
- A disabled adult (ages 18-59) with intellectual delays, Autism, Down's Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, Cystic Fibrosis or physical/neurological disabilities like MS, ALS, and Parkinson's Disease
- Someone who already knows/has some form of relationship with their abuser/offender (random burglaries, assaults, romance scams or identity theft are NOT eligible)
- Someone who resides in a domestic setting (nursing home residents are not eligible unless a victim of financial exploitation).

Domestic Violence: Domestic violence is one person using physical, sexual, emotional, or financial abuse, or threats of such harm, towards someone in their family or someone they are close to. The offender could be someone you are or have dated, have a romantic relationship with, live with, or even a spouse or child.

Older adults tend to normalize domestic violence and try to “tough it up.” However, domestic violence is NEVER OK and should NEVER happen to you. If you have been a victim now or in the past, it is not your fault and there is help.

What Help is There for a Senior Experiencing Domestic Violence?

- Call [Adult Protective Services](#) at 866-800-1409.
- The Naperville Police Department has three licensed social workers and one counselor in its [Social Services Division](#) who can offer support and guidance to residents.
- If you are in current and imminent risk or harm and if a judge says yes to your petition, [an order of protection](#) will prohibit the offender from coming near you.
- Organizations like [Metropolitan Family Services](#) offer counseling, support groups and other resources.
- If you’re being abused, you can move out or evict the abusive person if you own the property. If you rent, you have options under the Safe Homes Act to terminate your lease prematurely without penalty.

SECTION 4 – Caregiver Support

Ask anyone who has filled a caregiver role ... caregiving is the hardest job in the world. When it comes to caring for our loved ones, we must first remember to care for ourselves. Luckily, there are various methods nearby ready to assist you so you can feel supported no matter what your style of support looks like.

- Support Groups
 - Belmont Village Carol Stream (Caregiver Support Group): jenavarr@belmontvillage.com; 630-510-2510
 - Metropolitan Family Services: 630-784-4800
 - Caring for the Caregiver, Women Life Transition age 60+, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren
 - Compass (Caregiver Support Group): St. Raphael Church, Kathy Ford, Rn, Naperville: 630-355-4545
 - Fox Valley Hands of Hope_(Grief): several alternating support groups; visit <https://www.fvhh.net/> or email griefsupport@fvhh.net to learn more about current offerings.
- Social activities with your loved one ([Memory Café](#) in Naperville)
- Respite services (adult day programs)
- Meditation, yoga, mindfulness practices. Take 10 minutes in the morning, afternoon, and evening to separate yourself and go to a quiet place that relaxes you. Check-out, unwind, and take deep breaths so that a flood of oxygen can provide fresh energy to your brain.
- Virtual seminars and senior resource newsletter: www.Elderwerks.org

- Crisis and warm lines (Free and confidential)
 - Suicide & Crisis Prevention Hotline: 9-8-8 (call or text 24/7; Veterans press 1)
 - AARP warm line: 888-281-0145 (has friendly volunteers to chat with- NOT a crisis line)
 - 24/7 Helpline-Alzheimer's Association: 800-272-3900
 - NAMI DuPage: 630-752-0066
- Reach out to [Police Social Services](#) for further clinical support and resources.

Remember, what you are doing is incredible work. But you must put on your own oxygen mask first. You don't have to do it alone.

RIGHT SIDEBAR – Related Resources

Naperville Police Department's social workers keep an updated list of resources for seniors. Find everything from counseling and mental health resources, to cleaning services, dementia support, legal assistance, insurance and benefits assistance, in-home healthcare and more!

View the resource guide now [[link to senior resources doc](#)]