



DON'T FALL FOR A FRAUDULENT CALL

Your phone rings and on the other end of the line someone says—in your native language—that one of your relatives needs cash for urgent medical treatment. Can you send some straight away?

The caller says they are a government official, trying to help out your family members and asks you to transfer money into an international bank account.

Watch out. It's probably a scam.

Government officials don't make unsolicited calls seeking cash to assist sick relatives. And there is almost certainly no one you know in a hospital overseas and desperate for money.

The ACCC is warning people about these types of scams, often called native language scams, the incidence of which appears to be on the rise.

In the four months to 30 April 2012, the ACCC received 48 complaints regarding

native language scams; in 16 instances, the people making the complaints reported cash losses.

The callers have been speaking in Polish, Croatian, and Serbian. But other languages may also be used.

ACCC Deputy Chairman, Dr Michael Schaper, says the scammers are well versed in preying on people's goodwill to assist someone in need.

'A niece stranded at an airport in a foreign country, or a gravely ill relative, are some of the common stories the scammers use.'

Dr Schaper says people receiving such calls should protect themselves to ensure they don't become a victim.

'No matter how convincing the caller may seem, always check with other family members and ensure the person is who they say they are,' Dr Schaper says.

'Avoid making any arrangements if you are contacted unexpectedly by someone asking for up-front payment via money order, wire or international funds transfer.'

Consider what personal information you share publicly. Often scammers use information from publicly available directories, or online, to identify potential victims.

For further information on scams visit SCAMwatch.gov.au or follow SCAMwatch on Twitter at [@SCAMwatch_gov](https://twitter.com/SCAMwatch_gov)