

## San Leandro Police Department

# TOP 10 SCAMS FOR 2011

The National Consumers League has released the top 10 scams of 2011. Bogus prizes and sweepstakes have bumped fake check scams to take the number 1 spot. Also making the top 10 for the first time is scammers posing as loved ones and preying on the emotions of victims.

Additionally, another significant finding is that scammers appear to have targeted their scams at particular age groups more than ever in 2011. Fake prizes, sweepstakes and free gifts make up almost 27% of complaints for all age groups. However, in the 56-65 age group, the percentage of these types of fraud is almost 41 and in the 65+ age group the percentage is even higher, approximately 60.

Here are the top 10 scams for 2011:

1. Prizes, sweepstakes and fake free gifts
2. Fake check scams
3. Internet scams for general merchandise
4. Phishing and spoofing
5. Advance fee loans and "credit arrangers"
6. Scholarships and grants
7. Friendship and sweetheart swindles
8. Nigerian money offers (not prizes)
9. Family or friend imposters
10. Fraudulent Internet auctions

New to the top 10 is the Family/Friend Imposter Scam. In response to increased complaints, the NCL's Fraud Center began tracking this fraud (also known as the "Grandparent Scam") in 2011. Typically, a con artist poses as a relative in distress or someone claiming to represent the relative (such as a lawyer or law enforcement agent). The scammer frantically describes an emergency situation in which they have found themselves (such as being arrested, in an auto accident, etc.) and asks the victim to send money for bail, hospital bills, etc. The victim is urged not to tell anyone, such as the parent of the "grandchild" because they do not want them to find out. The majority of money lost in these scams was sent via wire transfer, a popular payment method among scammers because of the difficulty to track and to recover lost funds.

The information in this article is provided by the National Consumers League, a private, nonprofit advocacy group representing consumers on marketplace and workplace issues. For more information, please access the website at [www.nclnet.org](http://www.nclnet.org).



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