

# Our Family Safe Word

[A free guide from BC Tech for Seniors](#)

A family safe word is a word or phrase your whole family agrees on ahead of time. If someone calls claiming to be a relative in trouble, ask for it. No safe word, no money. It works even when the voice sounds exactly right, because it does not depend on the voice at all.

## Choose your safe word in 3 steps

**1**

Pick something a stranger could not guess or find online. Not a pet's name or a birthday. Think of a place you once got lost together, or a joke from a family trip. Keep it short and easy to remember.

**2**

Share it with everyone. Grandchildren, adult children and you. Tell them in person or by phone, never in a post or a video.

**3**

Keep it in the family. Write it down once somewhere safe, but not on the fridge.

Our family safe word:

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Date we chose it:

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## Start the family conversation

We're picking a family safe word. Ours is \_\_\_\_\_. If anyone ever calls you asking for money and can't say the word, hang up and call us back.

Who in our family should know the safe word?

Where can we keep a reminder safe, away from public view?

If someone calls asking for money, what will we do before responding?

## If a caller says a relative is in trouble

1. Slow down. Say: "I am going to call you back."
2. Ask for the safe word. No safe word? Hang up.
3. Call back on a number you already have, never one the caller gives you.
4. Check with another family member.
5. Never hand money to anyone who comes to your door.

**Hanging up is not rude. A real family member will understand.**

## Warning signs checklist

- ☐ An unexpected call about an emergency that needs money
- ☐ Pressure to act right now
- ☐ A request to keep it secret from the family
- ☐ Payment by gift cards, cryptocurrency or cash courier
- ☐ Someone being sent to your home, or a taxi to take you to the bank
- ☐ The caller will not let you hang up or call back

[One or more of these? Slow down and check.](#)

Already sent money or shared details? It is not your fault. Call your bank first, then your local police, then the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre at 1-888-495-8501.

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