



FRAUD ALERT

ROMANCE SCHEME

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Office of Inspector General is issuing this fraud alert to highlight an increasingly common scam involving social media, email, and dating websites.

Fraudsters use fake profiles to contact elderly people or others they believe are not tech-savvy, develop online romances with their victims, and ultimately lure their victims into paying hefty "EPA fines" to prevent their arrest or secure their release.

How can you protect yourself?



Exercise extreme caution if someone trying to develop an online relationship resists meeting in person or talking in a phone or video call.



Refuse urgent or direct payment requests to address supposed EPA fines.



Contact the EPA directly to verify the legitimacy of any Agency contacts or requests for payment or information.



Learn more about this scam and what to look for.

LEARN MORE



EPA OIG HOTLINE

If you believe you have been a victim of this scam or have knowledge of other potential fraud involving the EPA, report it to the EPA OIG Hotline by completing the online complaint form at www.EPA.gov/OIG, emailing OIG.Hotline@epa.gov, or calling 888-546-8740.

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