WV Executive Branch Privacy Tip

As you know, the Privacy Office occasionally issues tips for the purpose of assisting you in making informed decisions in your "away from work" life. The following tip is for that purpose.

ELDER PRIVACY



Question:

I have recently accepted the responsibility of taking care of my parents. Are there tips for helping to protect their personal information?

Answer:

Financial abuse is one of the most common forms of abuse against the elderly. Financial abuse involves the unauthorized use of a person's funds or property. Many times the elderly will fall victim to fraud and scams. There are many tips that you can use to help your elderly friends and family learn how to protect themselves:

- Never give out your personal information to someone over the phone without verifying that it is a trusted source.
- Always ask to receive written material about any offer or charity. Ask someone who you trust (for financial advice) to review the materials.
- If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- Always review all documents carefully and take your time in making a decision. Legitimate companies won't pressure you to make a snap decision.
- Do not sign anything that you do not fully understand.
- Before using a website, check out the security/encryption software that it uses.
- Keep a list of all your credit cards and account information along with the card issuer's contact information. If anything looks suspicious or you lose your credit card(s), contact the card issuer immediately.
- If you have become a victim of fraud, report it to state, local, or federal law enforcement agencies.

For additional tips on fraud protection:

- WV Attorney General's Office: http://www.ago.wv.gov/consumerprotection
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI): http://www.fbi.gov/scams-safety/fraud/seniors

Note: Your agency/bureau/department/division may have specific requirements – always check your policies and procedures. If you have questions, contact your Privacy Officer.