

Learn to Detect Elderly Financial Fraud

It's no surprise that elderly Americans are among the most vulnerable group of people in today's society. According to the National Research Council, between 1 and 2 million Americans age 65 and older have been injured, exploited or mistreated by someone on whom they depended for care or protection. A vulnerable adult is classified as someone who is over the age of 60, 65 depending on the state or disabled individuals over 18 and oftentimes, the person lacks the mental and physical capacity to care for themselves. Financial exploitation of a vulnerable adult can be forging an older person's signature, cashing checks without authorization or permission, or misusing or stealing an older person's money or possessions.

Below are some red flags that can be associated with vulnerable abuse fraud:

- Signature seems forged, unusual or suspicious
- A set of out-of-sync check numbers
- Allegations of "missing funds" from a vulnerable adult's account
- A vulnerable adult fails to understand recently completed transactions or repercussions of his or her actions
- Financial institution or credit card statements start being sent to an address other than the vulnerable adult's home
- Unusual cash withdrawals from a checking account in a short period of time
- Abrupt increase in credit card activity or a sudden "flurry" of bounced checks
- Vulnerable adult's account shows ATM activity even though he or she is physically unable to leave home
- Vulnerable adult is accompanied by a third party who encourages the withdrawal of a large sum of cash and may not allow third party to speak
- Abrupt and unexpected change in a financial Power of Attorney, new names added to signature cards or new joint account

Source: BITS Fraud Protection Toolkit