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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Fairmont Police Department
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**Fairmont Police Department cautions area residents to be cautious of
telephone scams from Canada, Spain and Mexico**

Fairmont, Minn. The Fairmont Police Department is advising area residents to be cautious of “emergency” calls alleging to be from family members asking for money to be wire transferred to Foreign Country.

In the last several weeks reports to Fairmont Police Department began regarding one of the latest frauds to get money from unsuspecting residents. While the details of the scam can vary, this latest financial scam involves scam artists who pretend to be a family member supposedly involved in a traffic accident or DUI in Mexico and Spain.

The caller uses fear, sympathy, and personal attachment to family members to convince the person called to wire money to a relative in need. The callers have pretended to be a grandson and have used the correct name of the relative. The scam artist stated he was involved in an accident and needs money wire transferred quickly to pay for the rental car or damage to property or medical expenses or fines. When the grandparent recognizes that the voice of the caller doesn’t sound quite like his or her grandson the caller states he has a cold or is just panicked from being involved in an accident or arrested. The caller requests an immediate wire transfer to them (ranging from \$1000 to \$4500) to help them. They also ask the victim not to tell his “parents” and they’ll pay the grandparent back upon return to the USA. If the victim sends the money they will most likely receive another “emergency” call requesting even more money with another convincing excuse for needing the money.

Other variations of the scam include a caller claiming to be a police officer or hospital official. The caller provides the correct name of the family member to the victim and instructs them to send money for their family members bail to secure release or provides a number to call for instructions on how to send money for emergency medical expenses.

The victims have been instructed to go to the nearest Wal-mart and send the money to the “grandson” via Western Union or Money Gram. What the victim may not know is that a money wire transfer can be picked up anywhere in the world, no matter what location the sender writes on the receipt. Wal-marts are most likely chosen because they are easy to find in most areas and they offer money wire transfer services.

Investigation into these types of frauds typically cross international borders which makes prosecution unlikely and the recovery of any lost funds nearly impossible. Area residents are advised that if they receive this type of call they should not wire transfer money and law enforcement should be contacted. Independent verification of a family member’s welfare and location can typically be made with a few phone calls. Take the time to think first before acting.