

TRAVEL SCAM RED FLAGS

Keep this page by the phone — and share it with someone you love.

EVERY SCAM HAS THE SAME THREE SIGNS

- **URGENCY** — “You must act right now, tonight.”
- **SECRECY** — “Don’t tell your family. Don’t tell the bank.”
- **STRANGE PAYMENT** — see the four red lines below.

Any ONE of these: slow down. Two or more: it’s a scam.

THE FOUR PAYMENT RED LINES — ALWAYS A SCAM

- **Wire transfer** to a person you don’t know
- **Gift cards** read over the phone
- **Cryptocurrency** of any kind
- **Cash to a courier** sent to your door

No government office, airline, hotel, or real emergency uses these. None.

YOUR FAMILY’S TWO HABITS

1. **The code word.** Pick one word only your family knows. Share it by voice, never in writing. Any emergency call claiming to be family must say it. No word = no money.
2. **The callback rule.** Never send money on an incoming call. Hang up. Call the person back on the number you already have.

A real emergency survives a 10-minute check. A scam does not.

QUICK CHECKS

- **Email or text about a booking?** Don’t click. Open the airline or hotel app yourself.
- **“Consulate” or “court” demanding money?** Real ones never call for wires or gift cards.
- **Hotel desk calls your room for your card number?** Hang up. Walk down instead.
- **“Police” want to check your cash?** Real police never do. Offer to walk to the station.
- **Caller sounds exactly like your grandchild?** Voices can be faked by AI. Use the code word.

IF MONEY ALREADY MOVED

Call your bank immediately (wires can sometimes be recalled in the first hours). Report it at ic3.gov and reportfraud.ftc.gov. Then tell your family — no shame. These scams are built to fool smart, loving people. Talking about it protects everyone else.

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