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Medical emergency or funeral + tickets may result in fraud!

A man is currently calling travel agents requesting tickets for same/next day travel. He is advising agents that he is buying tickets for his children/relatives to travel immediately because 1) his ex-wife or another relative has had a heart attack or 2) someone has died and immediate tickets are needed for family members to attend the funeral. The caller has a "mature" sounding voice and he has a detailed and convincing story for why he is buying the tickets.

Although this may sound like a valid request, the fraudster is actually purchasing tickets for passengers using compromised credit cards. In the past four weeks, the caller has convinced over 30 travel agents to issue 95+ tickets valued at more than \$30,000.

Here are some interesting similarities:

- Often, it is the first call of the day
- Local addresses and phone numbers are given
- He states:
 - he has no computer and no email
 - you can't call him, feigning he is unavailable, but offers to call you back
 - he can't come to the agency for one reason or another
 - he is retired
 - he had previously purchased tickets from the agency or its branch office, and sometimes refers to an employee by name
- Travel is within the US and the departure airport is not local to the travel agent or caller
 - Departure/arrival airports most used include: ATL, MSY, CLT, HOU, LAX or ONT

Some travel agents became wise to the scheme by:

- Calling the phone number - it was disconnected
- Verifying the address - it did not exist or was not his residence
- Asking the caller to come to the agency with the credit card - caller never appeared or hung up
- Checking the agency's records for prior purchases by the caller - not a known client

How can you further help yourself and others prevent fraud?

- Adopt a company policy on unknown/local customers that requires a manual credit card imprint and original cardholder signature, along with personally verifying the cardholder's valid identification (See Section 8 of the online Industry Agents' Handbook at www.arccorp.com).
- Verify addresses and telephone numbers by using internet research (i.e., reverse address or telephone searches).
- Use ARC's Red Flags list to determine the risk of issuing the ticket

If you have received such a call, contact ARC's Fraud Prevention department for important follow-up information and more ways to identify possible compromised credit cards at fifp@arccorp.com or (703) 816-8137.

More on current schemes, fraud prevention and credit card transaction red flags can be found at:
<https://www.arccorp.com/support/fraud-prevention.jsp>



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About ARC

As the financial backbone of the U.S. travel industry, ARC enables commerce among travel agencies, airlines, and travel suppliers, and offers them secure and accurate financial settlement services. About 16,000 travel agencies and 190 airlines make up the ARC network. In 2011, ARC settled more than \$82 billion worth of transactions between travel sellers and airlines. ARC also supplies transactional data to organizations, facilitating better business decisions through fact-based market analyses. Established in 1984, ARC is headquartered in Arlington, Va. For more information, visit www.arccorp.com.