



Office of the
Comptroller of the Currency

SAFE MONEY



GUARDING AGAINST FINANCIAL FRAUDS & SCAMS

FINANCIAL & INVESTMENT FRAUD





Financial and investment fraud

involves deceitful practices to lure individuals into fake investments, often by promising returns that are too good to be true.

These scams often promise high returns with little or no risk, but victims end up losing their money.

SAFE MONEY is a series of informational sheets developed by the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) to help consumers recognize and avoid common financial frauds and scams.

RED FLAGS

-  **Unsolicited investment offers** promising high returns with little to no risk.
-  **Pressure to “Act fast”** on an investment or risk missing out on a “once-in-a-lifetime” opportunity.
-  **Unconventional payment requirements**, such as wire transfers or cryptocurrencies.
-  **Lack of documentation** such as prospectuses or disclosure statements for investments.





FRAUD METHODS

- Funnel Accounts:** Fraudsters use a bank account to transfer illicit funds, making the account owner an unknowing participant in money laundering.
- Investment Scams:** Sophisticated scams where fraudsters build long-term relationships with victims and convince them to invest large sums in fake investment platforms. Fraudsters refer to this as “pig butchering.”
- Ponzi & Pyramid Schemes:** Scams that pay supposed profits on investments by using the investments of new participants.

AVOID FRAUD

Research Before Investing

- Check with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), or state securities regulator to verify the legitimacy of the person or firm involved in the investment opportunity.

Be Skeptical of Guarantees

- All investments carry some risk. Be suspicious of promises of guaranteed or unusually high returns.

Avoid High-Pressure Tactics

- Legitimate investment professionals will provide time for risk considerations and won't pressure for immediate action.

Monitor Financial Accounts

- Regularly review financial and investment accounts for any unusual or unauthorized transactions. Immediately report discrepancies to the financial institution and relevant authorities.

REPORT FRAUD

Financial and investment fraud involves schemes that trick victims into investing money based on false information and/or promises. Taking immediate and comprehensive action can help mitigate the impact of financial and investment fraud.

Always be vigilant and report suspicious activities promptly.

Contact the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)

- File a complaint using the SEC's [online form](#), or call SEC's Office of Investor Education & Advocacy at 800-732-0330 for guidance on how to file.

Contact Internet Crime Complaint Center

- Submit a complaint to the [IC3](#), a division of the FBI.

Alert State's Securities Regulator

- Contact your state securities regulator or attorney general's office for assistance.
- Find local [State Consumer Protection Office](#).

Notify Investment Firm or Broker

- Immediately report the fraud to your broker, investment advisor, or the compliance department of the firm where the investment occurred.
- Many firms have dedicated fraud departments that can assist in investigating and resolving disputes.



Office of the
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Promoting a Safe, Sound, and Fair Federal Banking System



The Office of the Comptroller of the Currency's (OCC) mission is to ensure that national banks and federal savings associations operate in a safe and sound manner, provide fair access to financial services, treat customers fairly, and comply with applicable laws and regulations.