

## **Fighting Fraud: Avoiding Scams**

July 20, 2021



### **What are scams?**

Scams can be anything from identity theft to pressuring you to buy a useless and high priced service to impersonating a grandchild in an emergency to get you to send the scammer money.<sup>1</sup> **They can happen to anyone.** So far in 2021, scams have cost Canadians almost \$90 million.<sup>2</sup>

### **Protect yourself from scams:<sup>5</sup>**

- Just say no or hang up
- Do your research before giving out any information. It never hurts to verify.
- Don't give out personal information
- Don't pay upfront fees for any reason
- Learn to browse the internet safely
- Protect your online accounts

For more details and more tips on protecting yourself from frauds and scams, go to the [Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre](#) or try out the tools created by the [Ontario Securities Commission](#).

### **Investment Scams: What are they and how can I avoid them?**

Investment scams are where scammers persuade the victim to invest money in a fake or questionable investment. Often, the victim loses some or all of their money<sup>3</sup>. In June 2021, the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre alerted Canadians that insurance companies and other financial institutions have been making increasing numbers of reports about an ongoing fixed income investment (ex. bonds) scam spoofing their company names. Spoofing means the scammer impersonates a legitimate company.<sup>2</sup>

#### **4 Signs of the potential investment is a fraud:<sup>4</sup>**

- ! You are promised high returns with little or no risk
- ! You get a hot tip or insider information
- ! You feel pressured to buy
- ! They're not registered to sell investments

Before you invest, check the registration and background of the person offering you the investment. In general, anyone selling securities or offering investment advice must be registered with their provincial securities regulator. Visit [CheckBeforeYouInvest.ca](#) to make sure the person or firm is registered.

Follow us on social media:

## **Fighting Fraud: Avoiding Scams**

July 20, 2021



### **Other Recently Reported Scams to Watch Out For:**

- **COVID-19 Vaccine Scam:** Text messages claim to be from the Government of Canada and will say that due to a recent vaccination, you are eligible for a Vaccine Relief Fund. Fraudsters want to steal your personal and/or financial information, which can be used for identity fraud. Don't click any links or provide any personal/financial information.
- **SIN Number:** Phone calls tell you that your Social Insurance Number (SIN) is linked to a fraudulent account or criminal activity and then demand that you either:
  - Verify or provide your personal information
  - Withdraw money and deposit it into a "safe account" or to a representative

**Just hang up and don't provide any personal and/or financial information!**

### **References**

1. Competition Bureau of Canada. (2018). Little Black Book of Scams. 2nd ed. [https://www.competitionbureau.gc.ca/eic/site/cb-bc.nsf/vwapj/CB-IBBS2-EN.pdf/\\$file/CB-IBBS2-EN.pdf](https://www.competitionbureau.gc.ca/eic/site/cb-bc.nsf/vwapj/CB-IBBS2-EN.pdf/$file/CB-IBBS2-EN.pdf)
2. Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre. (2021, July 14). Recent Scams and Frauds. <https://www.antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca/index-eng.htm>
3. Ontario Securities Commission. (2018, December 13). 8 Common Investment Scams. <https://www.getsmarteraboutmoney.ca/protect-your-money/fraud/protecting-against-fraud/8-common-investment-scams/>
4. Ontario Securities Commission. (2021, June 7). 4 Signs of Investment Fraud. <https://www.getsmarteraboutmoney.ca/protect-your-money/fraud/protecting-against-fraud/4-signs-of-investment-fraud/>
5. Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre. (2021, March 19). Protect Yourself From Scams and Fraud. <https://www.antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca/protect-protegez-eng.htm>

### **How Do I Report a Scam?**

#### **Report to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre**

- **By phone:** 1-888-495-8501 (toll free)  
Calls are answered Mon to Fri, from 10 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. EST
- **Online:** <https://www.antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca/report-signalez-eng.htm>
  - You can sign in with either option below:
    - **GC Key** (user ID/password)
    - **Sign-In Partners** (banking credentials)

**For more information, visit [What To Do If You're a Victim of Fraud](#).**

Follow us on social media: