

ALABAMA SECURITIES COMMISSION

Post Office Box 304700 Montgomery, Alabama 36130-4700
Telephone: (334) 242-2984 or 1-800-222-1253 Fax: (334) 242-0240
Email: asc@asc.alabama.gov Website: www.asc.alabama.gov

The Grinch Isn't the Only One Looking to Spoil Your Holiday Cheer 5 Tips to Protect Yourself from Sneaky Scamsters

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA (December 10, 2021) –While the Grinch's heart grew three sizes causing him to return the items he stole, don't expect the same from a fraudster. Once they stake a claim on your money, it won't be returned. To keep your money safe from holiday season swindlers, the Alabama Securities Commission (ASC) is issuing these five tips:

Tip No. 1: Do not answer strange phone numbers. If you do not know who is calling, send it to voicemail. This is your best protection. Scamsters can fake their phone number and make it look like it is from your area code. If the caller leaves a message instructing you to call them back, DO NOT CALL the number they provide. Instead, look the number up and call the number provided either by your last billing statement, website, or phone directory.

Tip No. 2: Never give out personal information over the phone. Remember, a government agency and financial institution will not call and ask you to verify your social security number or bank account information. If someone calls claiming to be from the IRS, another government agency, or your bank, HANG UP. Find the real number to call by going to the official website or find it on your last statement.

Tip No. 3: A legitimate investment opportunity does not require you to "act now." If someone calls claiming they have a "can't lose investment opportunity, but you must act now," hang up. All investing involves risk, so be on the lookout for "too good to be true" opportunities. Remember, a good deal today will usually be a good deal tomorrow. When considering an investment product or researching a financial professional you would like to hire, your first step should be calling the ASC at 1-800-222-1253 to ensure they are both registered. Also, you may request a free background check on the financial professional.

Tip No. 4: Register your number on the national do not call register. You can register your phone number with the FTC [here](#). According to the FTC, if you are on this registry, it is illegal for a company to call you with a sales pitch unless you are a previous customer. Once you are registered, anyone calling you and attempting to make a sale is already breaking the law. This will reduce the number of unwanted calls you receive, but it will not stop scammers.

Tip No. 5: Do not give control of your electronic device to a stranger. Never install apps at the direction of a random text or a "sales representative." Remember, downloading files and visiting websites sent to you via email, social media or text message is dangerous. If you install malware, fraudsters can run up credit cards and drain financial accounts. If the deal sounds too much like a steal, look out, you might be the one getting robbed. Stay vigilant this season when engaging with technology. Keep the holiday spirit, but drop the holiday thieves. The ASC wishes you safe and happy holidays!

The ASC is Alabama's securities regulatory agency. The mission of the ASC is to protect Alabamians from investment fraud and preserve legitimate capital markets in Alabama. The investor's best protection from investment fraud is contacting the ASC at 1-800-222-1253 to ensure investment companies, individuals, and the products hold a registration with the Commission as required by law. To access investor education

materials or request a virtual or in-person presentation, visit the ASC [website](#).

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For further information contact Public Affairs at 1-800-222-1253.

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