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# This Week is International Fraud Awareness Week
# ASC Urges the Public to Stay Informed About the Latest Frauds

**Montgomery, Alabama (November 19, 2026) –** This week is International Fraud Awareness Week, a global effort to minimize the impact of fraud by promoting fraud awareness and education. The Alabama Securities Commission (ASC) remains dedicated to educating the public about the latest frauds we are seeing in Alabama and urges the public to stay alert and avoid fraud.

Earlier this week, a cyberattack hit 178 organizations worldwide. Hackers planted malicious code on some of the world's most popular websites, potentially exposing visitors to theft of their personal and financial information, such as users' credit cards, cryptocurrency, and other data. Opening a website does not necessarily mean that information was stolen, but follow these five steps to ensure both personal and financial information is protected.

- Update devices, including iPhones and iPads, to the latest operating systems and security updates.
- Check financial accounts for unauthorized transactions and contact the firm immediately if suspicious activity is detected.
- Review cryptocurrency transfers to ensure payments went to the correct address.
- Monitor other online accounts for suspicious activity, including login notifications, profiles, and payment information.
- Check credit reports regularly for unusual activity, including new credit cards or loans, credit pulls, closed accounts, or new utility information.

The Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) Consumer Sentinel Network reports that U.S. consumers lost an estimated $16.1 billion to fraud during 2025. The most common scam was the imposter scam, which occurs when a criminal pretends to be someone else, such as a government official, a well-known business, a bank, a tech support service, a charity, or a family member, and tries to trick victims into sending money or sharing sensitive personal information. Investment fraud was the fourth most reported type of fraud but caused the most financial harm. Just over one million cases of imposter frauds were reported, accounting for $3.5 billion in losses, compared with just over 144,000 investment-related frauds, which accounted for $8 billion in losses.

Consumers are also losing their hard-earned money to fraudsters through bank transfers and cryptocurrency. Fraudsters stole over $2.28 billion through bank transfers and over $1.78 billion through cryptocurrency in 2025. Once a criminal steals a victim's money, it is very difficult to recover. To combat this fraud, the Alabama Legislature passed an important bill that makes it possible to recover victims' money if they transfer funds to a fraudster using a cryptocurrency ATM. As of October 1, 2026, the Cryptocurrency Kiosk Fraud Prevention Act mandates that the ATM operator must refund a victim if the victim notifies the ATM operator, local law enforcement, and the ASC within 60 days of the fraudulent cryptocurrency transaction.

The ASC is committed to its mission of proactively protecting investors from financial fraud through public education and outreach. Alabama residents can download investor education resources and subscribe to our quarterly Financial Exploitation Newsletter at asc.alabama.gov.

“The Commission stays at the forefront of fraud prevention and protection. We will soon be unveiling a new website that will serve as a central hub where consumers can learn about all types of fraud and how to protect themselves,” ASC Director Amanda Senn said. “The ASC will interact with all our fraud-fighting partners so that Alabama residents can visit one site to find education, resources, statistics, and fraud reporting instructions for any type of scam that hits Alabama.”

As the holiday season approaches in the weeks following International Fraud Awareness Week, the ASC urges Alabama residents to follow these simple tips:

- Stranger Danger! Never share your passwords or personal financial information with anyone who contacts you via social media, text, email, phone calls, and/or dating apps.
- Don’t click on strange links, such as electronic invitations or coupons sent from a stranger.
- Research and verify all investment opportunities and major purchases.
- If something sounds too good to be true, it is.
- Because of artificial intelligence, you should question everything you see or hear online.
- Avoid transactions if the person demands payment using cryptocurrency or gift cards.
- Slow down and don’t make quick decisions! Fraudsters will either pressure you with “fear of missing out” or use threats to make you act fast.
- Always use strong passwords.
- Avoid clicking on sponsored ads. Fraudsters will copy the look of legitimate websites and even allow you to shop, but you will never receive your merchandise. It is always wise to double-check the website before finalizing your purchase.
- Monitor your credit! You can now check your credit report weekly by visiting www.annualcreditreport.com.

The ASC cautions investors to thoroughly research any investment opportunity. Call the ASC at 1-800-222-1253 and ask the Registration Department to check out persons offering investment opportunities, investment advice for a fee, and any products they offer. Contact the ASC to report suspected fraud, inappropriate securities business practices, or to obtain consumer information. Free investor education and fraud prevention materials are available at www.asc.alabama.gov**.**

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For further information, call 1-800-222-1253 and ask for Public Affairs.