



Investor Alert: SEC Warns of Government Impersonators

SEC staff are aware of a number of ongoing investment scams in which con artists have used the names of real SEC employees to trick victims, including non-U.S. investors, into giving the fraudsters access to their brokerage accounts, revealing private information, and even sending the perpetrators money and other assets. Impersonation of U.S. Government agencies and employees (as well as of legitimate financial services entities) is one of several characteristic features of [advance fee fraud](#) solicitations and other fraudulent schemes. Even where the fraudsters do not request that funds be sent directly to them, they may use the personal information they obtain to steal the individual's identity and then misappropriate his or her financial assets.

The SEC does not endorse investment offers, assist in the purchase or sales of securities, or participate in money transfers. Also, SEC staff do not make unsolicited communications, including emails or phone calls, asking for detailed personal and financial information, such as shareholdings and PIN numbers. We will not, for example, contact individuals by telephone or email for purposes of:

- seeking assistance with a fund transfer;
- forwarding investment offers to them;
- advising individuals that they own certain securities;
- telling investors that they are eligible to receive disbursements from an investor claims fund or class action settlement; or
- offering grants or other financial assistance (especially for an upfront fee).

If you receive a call or email from someone claiming to be from the SEC (or another government agency), always verify the person's identity. Use the SEC's personnel locator, (202) 551-6000, to verify whether the caller is an SEC staff member and to speak with him or her directly. You can also call the SEC at (800) SEC-0330 for general information, including information about SEC enforcement actions and any investor claims funds. You also can ask whether the person calling you is employed by the SEC and request to speak with the staff member's supervisor if there is such an employee. Finally, if you have been contacted by someone misrepresenting himself as an SEC staff member, please let us know by either calling us or emailing us at oiea@sec.gov.

Related Items:

[PAUSE List of Fictitious Governmental Agencies and International Organizations Associated with Soliciting Entities](#)

["Advance Fee Fraud" Schemes](#)

[Worthless Stock: How to Avoid Doubling Your Losses](#)

[Fake Seals and Phony Numbers: How Fraudsters Try to Look Legit](#)

[FTC Identity Theft Site](#)

<http://www.sec.gov/answers/impersonators.htm>

We have provided this information as a service to investors. It is neither a legal interpretation nor a statement of SEC policy. If you have questions concerning the meaning or application of a particular law or rule, please consult with an attorney who specializes in securities law.

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