

Helping You Protect Your Money from Scammers

SCAM ALERT

Scammers are out to harm you! They are constantly discovering new ways to steal your money, from blackmail to romance scams to selling nonexistent items. To help you recognize these schemes, below we have compiled some common scams you should avoid and prepare yourself against.



Blackmail Scams

A blackmailer's goal is to frighten you into sending them money by threatening to distribute private content that could embarrass you. This content could be retrieved from your computer or phone, or shared over an email, text, or social media. They might instruct you to wire them money, or send it using a mobile app, a gift card, or cryptocurrency. These scammers can be complete strangers, or someone you've met online and thought you could trust.

What you should do: Don't give into the blackmailers' intimidation and high-pressure tactics. Stop communicating with them and never pay them. Keep all messages as evidence to help law enforcement. Keep in mind that you don't need to deal with this alone.



Grandparent Scams

If you get a call from someone who sounds like a grandchild or relative asking you to wire or transfer money or send gift cards to help them out of trouble, it could be a scam. Designed to play on your emotions, this scam is commonly used to target older adults, especially during the holidays.

What you should do: Stop and verify! Beware of a caller who insists on secrecy and contact your relative yourself to verify the story. If you can't reach them, try to get in touch with them through a trusted family member or friend.



Romance Scams

A romance scam is when a new love interest tricks you into falling for them when they just want your money. Romance scams start in a few different ways, usually online. Scammers may spend time getting to know you and developing trust to fool you into thinking the relationship is real before asking you for money, a loan, or access to your finances.

What you should do: Be careful about who you connect with and what information you share online, or over texts or social media. Don't send money or share sensitive personal information, such as bank account or credit card numbers or a Social Security number, with a new love connection. Perform a computer search on the person's name to see if the details you know don't match.



Sweepstakes/Inheritance Scams

You receive a notice stating that you've won a "big prize" or have received an unexpected inheritance. You're told that to claim the "prize" or "inheritance," you need to send funds to cover "processing fees" or "taxes." Once the money is sent, you never see your prize or inheritance.

What you should do: Independently verify the information by consulting reputable resources. Do not rely on resources the scammer gives you, since they are probably involved in the scam as well. Keep in mind you cannot win a sweepstakes you never entered!



Investment Scams

An investment scam involves the illegal or purported sale of a financial instrument. The typical investment scam is characterized by offers of low or no-risk investments, guaranteed returns, etc.

What you should do: Never trust a person or company just because they have a website; a convincing website can be set up quickly. Beware when responding to special investment offers, especially through unsolicited email. Always check with other resources regarding this person or company, and inquire about all the terms and conditions.

Watch for red flags and think twice before sending anyone your money!

- ✓ Seems too good to be true.
 - ✓ Guarantees success.
 - ✓ Pressures you to act "right away".
 - ✓ Promises unusually high returns.
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- ✓ Requires an upfront investment – even for a "free" prize.
 - ✓ Does not have the look of a real business.
 - ✓ Something just don't feel right.

Your security is our top priority. We're here to help. If you have any concerns or want to know more about how to help protect yourself, please contact your Financial Professional or Reliance Standard Retirement Services Customer Care at **800-435-7775**.

www.reliancestandardlife.com