

FIVE TIPS TO HELP YOU AVOID INVESTMENT FRAUD

Have you ever been given a “great offer” or a “hot tip” on an investment? Such investments, while tempting, can be risky. Following these five tips can help you keep your money safe from scammers and aggressive salesmen.

Listen for warning signs: Think twice if you hear any of these phrases:

“Your profit is guaranteed.”

“It’s an amazingly high rate of return.”

“There’s no risk.”

“You can get in on the ground floor.”

“This offer is only available today.”

“It’s a secret investment tip just for you.”

“I’ll get you the paperwork later.”

“Just make your check out to me.”

Review all investment products carefully: Most investments are some form of security that must be registered with the **Nevada Secretary of State's office**. ... The North American Securities Administrators Association website has great resources for older investors at www.nasaa.org.

If a company is not registered with the Secretary of State or the SEC, don't invest! Check the fit of the investment with your comfort level: Even if the product is registered, you need to carefully consider if it is the right kind of investment for you. Are you comfortable with the level of risk, your ability to access your funds, and length of time before you will see a return? Are there excessive withdrawal penalties?

Research the person with whom you're working: Is the person properly licensed in your state or with the SEC to sell this product? If not, beware. ... And to file a complaint, contact the Secretary of State's office. ... Help others - ... One AARP volunteer opportunity is through our free lunch program. Free lunch seminars are often used to lure people into investing in unsuitable or even fraudulent products.

You can protect yourself and help others by becoming an AARP Free Lunch Monitor. Armed with knowledge and tools, Free Lunch Monitors can help make the market place safer for all investors.

For more information, visit www.aarp.org/nofreelunch. (*The Nevada Appeal*) 24 May 2011