



Securities Commission

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Start the new year as a safe, informed investor: Nova Scotia Securities Commission unveils the Top Six Investor Threats of 2026

Halifax – As we begin a new year, fraudsters continue to prey on investors, looking to steal their hard-earned money. The Nova Scotia Securities Commission is alerting investors to the top six investor threats to watch out for in 2026. Knowing the most prominent investment frauds and how to identify the red flags of investment fraud is an investor's first line of defense.

1. "Pig Butchering" Schemes:

Since 2021 Pig Butchering schemes have been responsible for billions of dollars in losses across North America, and millions of dollars in losses in Nova Scotia. Scammers befriend victims online, build trust over time, and convince them to invest heavily in fake platforms before disappearing with the funds.

2. Deepfake Impersonations:

Social media sites are being flooded with AI-generated deepfake videos of influential people offering "can't miss" investment opportunities. A deepfake video of Prime Minister Mark Carney offering Canadians an opportunity to invest in a Federal Government AI program looks very real but is entirely fake and has led to considerable losses.

3. Website & App Spoofing:

Often using AI to generate professional graphics, scammers create clone websites that look identical to websites of legitimate financial institutions to trick users into handing over login credentials and funds. Always ensure a website or app is legitimate before providing login details or personal information.

4. Ramp and Dump Schemes:

These are a new twist on classic Pump and Dump schemes that use social media channels (like Facebook and Instagram) to promote investment groups and tout "can't miss" investments. These groups often use the logo and name of real financial institutions to feign legitimacy. The hype and promotion artificially inflate the stock price leading to huge profits for the fraudsters and significant losses to those caught up in the hyped scheme.

5. Short-Form Video Hype:

Scammers are increasingly using TikTok and Instagram Reels to post slick, professional-looking videos that tout "get rich quick" schemes to younger users. These

schemes promote advice that is bad, dangerous and possibly illegal.

6. Unregistered Solicitors:

Despite professional-looking websites and pitches, many individuals and entities offering investment opportunities are not properly licensed. Anyone offering investment opportunities or advice to Nova Scotians must be registered with the Commission, unless an exemption applies. Investments offered by unregistered individuals or unregistered platforms may be fraudulent.

"According to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre, in 2024, \$3.6 million was reported lost to investment fraud in Nova Scotia," said David Harrison, Investor Education and Communications Officer with the Commission. "Since only 5-10% of fraud is estimated to be reported the actual amount lost could be significantly higher, up to \$72 million. Nova Scotians need to know the ways fraudsters are targeting investors to spot fraud and avoid it."

If someone approaches you with an investment opportunity, or you find an investment opportunity online, **here are some of the red flags to watch out for to identify the opportunity as fraudulent:**

1. Promise of high returns for low or no risk, or guaranteed returns

There is no such thing as a high return investment that comes with low or no risk. There is always some risk in investing. No investment can deliver guaranteed returns.

2. High pressure tactics, you must decide now, FOMO

If someone offering you an investment opportunity is giving you little time to think it over or pressuring you to hand over money quickly, this is a major red flag. Fraudsters don't want you to think it over; they want you to hand over your money as soon as possible.

3. Lack of credible sources

If you can't verify the legitimacy of an investment from sources outside the person or entity offering the investment, this is a red flag. Many investments offered by fraudsters don't exist at all. Doing your own online research may reveal that a regulator has issued a caution or alert about an investment opportunity, or that the opportunity is noted as a scam, or that the proposed business doesn't exist. Where a politician, celebrity, influencer or other high-profile individual is touting the investment, you should always exercise caution.

4. Requests for remote access and screen-sharing

Be extremely cautious with any request for access to your computer. Fraudsters may request remote access or to guide you to installing "investment software," or the program "Any-Desk." Never grant remote access or share your screen with someone you do not know and trust.

5. Unregistered individuals

If a person offering investments is not registered, they and their investments may have no oversight from regulators. It is illegal to solicit investments without registration. This includes politicians, celebrities, influencers, and other high-profile individuals. Registration ensures the required proficiencies, solvency, and integrity of registrants

are in place when engaging in the business of trading in securities. This promotes investor protection and integrity of the capital markets. Unregistered individuals offering investments should be reported to regulators. You can check if the individual and the business offering the securities are registered [here](#).

For a full list of red flags to watch out for, visit the [CSA website](#).

The Nova Scotia Securities Commission is the provincial government agency responsible for regulating trading in securities and derivatives in the province.

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