

## Tips on avoiding fraud

- Verify before you buy. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- Check out the license and background of anyone purporting to sell investments.
- Take your time. Don't give in to high pressure sales tactics.
- If you've been a victim of fraud, or have any questions regarding potential fraud, contact the Massachusetts Securities Division at 617-727-3548, or toll-free in Massachusetts at 800-269-5428

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

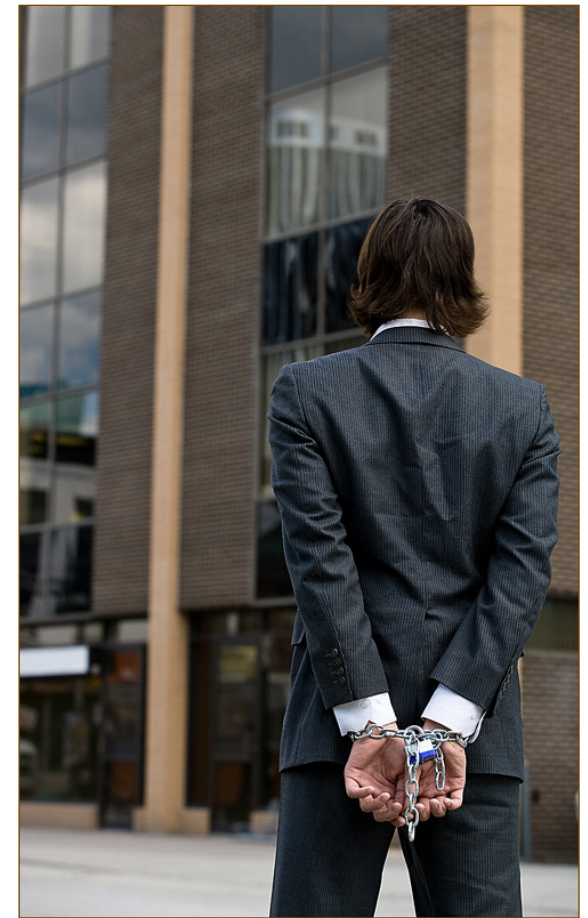


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*Protect Your Finances*

## Top Ten Financial Scams



**William Francis Galvin**  
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## **1 Welcome back, Mr. Ponzi**

A Ponzi Scheme is a fraudulent investment operation that pays investors from their own money or money paid from subsequent investors rather than from any actual profit earned.

## **2 Have I got a place for you in Boca!**

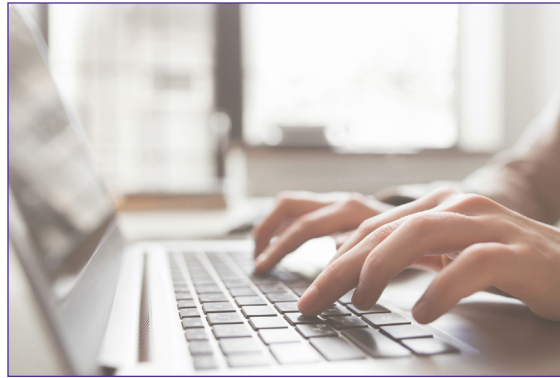
Time shares can be a legitimate investment; however, it is prudent to determine if the asset in question is genuine before you invest time or money in the venture.

## **3 Bonjour, Grandma, I'm in a Canadian Jail!**

Just because a call comes in the middle of the night does not necessarily mean bad news. It is important to verify that the caller is genuine, rather than to let your emotions take hold of you and risk your financial well being.

## **4 Who am I? The perils of identity theft**

Be careful with your personal information. If you are concerned, look up a phone number and call back to verify the authenticity of the call.



## **5 World Wide Web - friend or foe?**

Used properly, the internet can be a great tool for financial education; however, be wary of unsolicited emails and pop-up advertisements that obtain personal information through offering rewards.

## **6 You may already be a winner!**

Lottery Scams - Remember, you have to play if you want to win. Be aware of claims that you have won a contest that you haven't entered.

## **7 If you send me \$2,000, I will send you \$200 million.**

Advance Fee scams are another version of "if it sounds too good to be true..." Nobody is going to give you something for nothing, especially if its \$200 million for \$2,000.

## **8 Just because something is written down doesn't make it true - Promissory Notes, etc.**

Please read and understand everything included in a document before you sign it. Don't be afraid to ask questions. A credible salesperson will not hesitate to wait for your decision if it makes you, a potential buyer, more comfortable.

## **9 Want to make a little extra money in these tough economic times? Become a Mystery Shopper!**

Please see #5, *World Wide Web - friend or foe?* Be concerned about any and all unsolicited offers you receive - more often than not, they are associated with financial scams, where the goal is to steal your identity.

## **10 How to pay for stuff with money you do not have - the Wonderful World of Credit Cards.**

Credit cards can be a great example of learning to manage your finances. The flip side of that is spending money that you do not have. Use them as a secure way to purchase goods and services, not as a means to buy things that you cannot afford. Also, be wary of offers to reduce your credit card interest rates - confirm their authenticity before enrolling in these types of programs.

