

Karima M. Woods, Commissioner

DISB CONSUMER ALERT

Cyber Risk and Investment Threats Related to the War in Ukraine

The District of Columbia Department of Insurance, Securities and Banking (DISB) urges District investors and securities firms to be vigilant of increased threats from cyber-attacks and potential investment scams, especially related to the ongoing crisis in Ukraine.

Difficult times can bring out the best in people, but as regulators we know from experience that bad actors look to exploit crises to perpetrate scams on unsuspecting investors. Investors and firms should take the steps necessary to safeguard financial information and be on the lookout for potential investment scams.

DISB offers the following tips for investors.

1. **Be skeptical of investment opportunities linked to the headlines.** We are all aware of the rising costs of energy and fuel. Fraudsters may seek to take advantage of the rising gas prices to try and pitch extremely risky or bogus investments within the energy sector, including possible oil and gas deals. Delete unsolicited emails and social media messages touting investments with “limited or no risks” but “significant or guaranteed returns.”
2. **Do your homework.** Given the recent volatility in the financial markets, investors are likely concerned about their retirement accounts. Unscrupulous promoters may look to prey on this concern and attempt to convince investors to leave the regulated markets in favor of “less volatile” or “stable” investment opportunities. Investors are cautioned to investigate the background of the person and firm offering the investment, along with the investment itself. Check with your state or provincial securities regulator to determine if the person is registered to sell investments and if the investment has been registered. Consult with your financial professional before making decisions to sell any of your investments.
3. **Monitor accounts regularly and take steps to protect your financial data.** Be sure to keep an eye on your brokerage, bank, and credit card statements to spot potential fraudulent or suspicious transactions. Contact your financial professional, bank, or credit card issuer immediately if you see any questionable transaction or charge. Take steps to protect your financial data such as updating passwords and using dual factor authentication when it is available.

Securities firms should familiarize themselves with the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority's [Cybersecurity Checklist](#).

REPORT FRAUD

If you believe you have been the victim of a cyberattack, you may file a complaint with the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) at ic3.gov. To report an investment fraud, contact the DISB Enforcement and Consumer Protection Division at 202-727-8000.

About DISB

The mission of the [Department of Insurance, Securities and Banking \(DISB\)](#) is three-fold: (1) cultivate a regulatory environment that protects consumers and attracts and retains financial services firms to the District; (2) empower and educate residents on financial matters; and (3) provide financing for District small businesses.

Follow DISB on Social Media

DISB Twitter: [@DCDISB](https://twitter.com/DCDISB)

DISB Facebook: facebook.com/DISBDC