Money Habits

For Me

Money Habits Financial Red Flags Checklist

Why Complete This Worksheet?

Financial scams, questionable investments, and high-pressure money decisions often depend on one thing: **getting you to act before you have time to think.**

This checklist is designed to help you slow the decision down, recognize potential warning signs, verify whom you're dealing with, protect your personal information, and ask the right questions before you send money, sign documents, invest, or provide access to your accounts.

Remember, the goal is not to become suspicious of every financial opportunity. The goal is to develop the habit of **pausing, checking the facts, and understanding the decision before you act.**

Start Here

Step 1. Before You Make the Decision

☐ Do I understand exactly what I am being asked to do?

☐ Can I explain, in plain language, where my money is going?

☐ Do I understand the costs, fees, risks, and possible losses?

☐ Have I had enough time to think about the decision without pressure?

☐ Have I compared this option with at least one reasonable alternative?

Step 2. Watch for Pressure and Urgency

☐ I am being told I must act immediately.

☐ I am being warned that I will lose the opportunity if I wait.

☐ Someone is discouraging me from discussing the decision with another person.

☐ I am being told to keep the transaction or conversation secret.

☐ I am being pressured to send money using gift cards, cryptocurrency, wire transfer, cash, or another unusual payment method.

Step 3. Check the Person, Company, or Opportunity

☐ Have I independently verified the identity of the person or company?

☐ Did I find the contact information myself rather than relying only on information they provided?

☐ If this involves an investment or financial professional, have I checked appropriate registration, licensing, or disciplinary information?

☐ Are returns being described as guaranteed, unusually high, or nearly risk-free?

☐ Does the explanation make sense, or am I being asked to trust someone instead of understanding the transaction?

Step 4. Protect Your Accounts and Personal Information

☐ Did I initiate this contact?

☐ Am I being asked for a password, PIN, security answer, or one-time verification code?

☐ Am I being asked to provide sensitive personal or financial information unexpectedly?

☐ Have I verified an account warning by contacting the institution through an official source I already trust?

☐ Would giving this person access allow them to move money, open accounts, or change account information?

Step 5. When Advice Comes From Social Media or Online

☐ Do I know who is giving the advice and how they may benefit from it?

☐ Is the post explaining risks as clearly as it explains potential gains?

☐ Am I seeing evidence, or mainly testimonials, screenshots, hype, or fear of missing out?

☐ Have I checked the claim using an independent, reliable source?

☐ Would I make the same decision if I had never seen this post, video, or influencer recommendation?

Step 6. Before You Say Yes

Ask yourself one final question before you send money, sign something, invest, borrow, share sensitive information, or give someone access to an account:

Can I explain this decision to someone I trust - in plain English - including what it costs, what could go wrong, and why I am doing it?

☐ **YES - I understand it, and I am comfortable moving forward**

☐ **NOT YET - I need more information or time**.

If Something Does Not Feel Right

Stop the transaction. Do not let urgency make the decision for you. Verify the person, company, account, or opportunity independently. For a major financial decision, consider getting a second opinion from a qualified professional who is not benefiting from the transaction.

Remember: A legitimate financial decision should survive a pause, a few questions, and independent verification. Slowing down is not missing an opportunity. Sometimes it is the habit that protects your money.

For educational purposes only. This checklist provides general information and decision prompts. It is not financial, investment, legal, tax, or fraud-investigation advice.