

Investing Wisdom

Doing Your Homework on an Investment? Don't Overlook This Simple Step.

(NAPSA)—It can happen to even the savviest and most experienced investor. You're so busy researching an opportunity that you forget to look into the background of the financial professional offering it.

Before you invest, checking the credentials and track record of your potential financial professional can help you make smarter choices. Even if you've worked with a financial professional before, it's a good practice to run checks annually on his or her registration status and disciplinary history. Doing this check may even help you avoid fraud.

Remember to check at least once each year to make sure there aren't any new disciplinary actions or other red flags. Pick a date that you'll remember and put a reminder on your calendar.

Where can an investor find such information? The U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) launched **SmartCheck.gov**, with free tools that make it easier. The website also offers updates on fraud trends, interactive videos, and information about reporting fraud.

It can happen to me. Really?

Many savvy investors think fraudsters mostly target novices. In fact, research indicates that the typical defrauded investor is



Savvy investors think about the person and not just the profits.

quite seasoned. The problem is that schemes are constantly changing and becoming increasingly sophisticated.

Between 2010 and 2014, the CFTC took action on fraudulent schemes affecting more than 37,000 investors, with losses totaling nearly \$1.15 billion. The majority of these schemes involved unregistered financial professionals.

Time to bookmark SmartCheck.gov

With user-friendly tools and free access to government registration databases, it only takes a few minutes to get the background information needed to help you make informed investment decisions. As for the peace of mind it gives you, you can't put a price on that.

Prepared by the CFTC.