

Crypto Scam Red Flag Reference Card

Quick reference for advisors when clients mention crypto "opportunities"

Language Red Flags

They Say...	What It Means
"Guaranteed returns"	No legitimate investment guarantees returns. Ever.
"Risk-free"	Crypto is inherently volatile. This is a lie.
"Limited time offer"	Pressure tactics. Legitimate opportunities don't expire in 24 hours.
"Double your money"	Classic scam promise.
"Get in before it's too late"	FOMO manipulation.
"Only insiders know about this"	If it were real, they wouldn't be telling strangers.
"This is the next Bitcoin"	There are thousands of these. Almost all fail.
"Celebrity X endorsed this"	Fake endorsements are rampant. Verify independently.

Channel Red Flags

Channel	Risk	Notes
Unsolicited DM (Telegram, WhatsApp, Discord)	HIGH	Scammers' preferred method
Social media comment / reply	HIGH	Impersonation is trivial
Dating app match	HIGH	"Pig butchering" romance scams
Random email	HIGH	Phishing, fake exchanges
"Friend" never met in person	HIGH	Social engineering
YouTube / TikTok influencer	MEDIUM	Many are paid promoters

Common Scam Types

Type	How It Works
Pig Butchering	Fake romance builds trust, introduces "investment," drains funds over time
Fake Exchange	Convincing website, shows fake gains, blocks withdrawals
Impersonation	Pretends to be Coinbase support, a celebrity, or a known project
Rug Pull	Legitimate-looking project, team disappears with funds
Phishing	Fake emails or sites that capture login credentials
Pump & Dump	Hype a worthless token, sell high, leave buyers holding nothing

What Scammers Say About Advisors

These lines are designed to isolate clients from trusted advisors:

"What are their credentials?"

"They know about old money -- what do they know about new money?"

"They just want the fees, that's why they don't care about crypto."

"Are they protecting or preventing you?"

"Do they even have Telegram?"

Your response: Recognize the pattern. Your literacy is your best counter-argument.

Quick Client Checklist

Run through these before any crypto decision:

- Did someone approach you, or did you find them?
- Are you being asked to act quickly?
- Were you asked to move funds to a new wallet or exchange?
- Are returns described as "guaranteed" or "risk-free"?
- Is the communication happening on Telegram, WhatsApp, or Discord?
- Did a romantic interest introduce you to this opportunity?
- Are you being asked to keep this secret from family or your advisor?

2+ "Yes" answers = HIGH probability of scam. Pause and investigate.

Reporting Resources

Agency	URL
FBI IC3 (Internet Crime Complaint Center)	ic3.gov
FTC (Federal Trade Commission)	reportfraud.ftc.gov
SEC (Tips, Complaints, Referrals)	sec.gov/tcr
State Attorney General	Varies by state