



MINISTRY OF FINANCE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MINISTER OF FINANCE'S WARNING ON LETTERS OR EMAILS PURPORTING TO BE FROM HIS OFFICE

The Minister of Finance and the Financial Intelligence Centre (FIC) would like to warn South Africans about bogus letters or emails which purport to be from the Minister of Finance and other senior public officials, and use what looks like the logos of the FIC and other state institutions. **(See below for how you can recognise the scam)**

The Minister of Finance condemns the use of his name and that of the FIC in what is clearly an attempt to con South Africans to part with their hard-earned money. He urges South Africans to report all suspected scams at the nearest police station.

The Financial Intelligence Centre (FIC) is one of the seven institutions, affectionately referred to as the Finance Family, that report to the Ministry of Finance. The FIC is mandated to ensure the stability and integrity of our financial system. It coordinates South Africa's framework to combat money laundering and the financing of terrorism; and it provides the financial intelligence that is increasingly coming to the fore in the investigation of priority crimes.

The FIC is aware of these 419 scams and has for some time been running on its website (www.fic.gov.za) a warning to the public against fraudulent schemes that purport to have the authority of the FIC, the Minister of Finance as well as other public officials. The FIC neither requires payments from anyone for its services, nor does it pay out funds to anyone. Origins of these scam notices and how individuals are targeted is continuously being evolved by criminals, and is an international phenomenon. Should members of the public receive a communication purporting to be from the FIC (or any other government department) that refers to payments to be made or to be received, it is clearly a scam and they should not respond to it. Rather, they should report such communication at their nearest police station.

Such scams will only work to the extent that South Africans have an unquenchable thirst for easy wealth. We need to continue the struggle to free our country from the tendencies of selfish individualism and short-termism. Fellow South Africans who are forever looking for opportunities for making easy money become easy prey for scams. There is no easy walk to wealth.

HOW WOULD YOU RECOGNISE A SCAM?

- The e-mail requestor asks for bank account information, credit card numbers, driver's licence number, passport number, information about members of your family, and other personal information
- The e-mail advises that you have won a prize – even though you are not aware of having entered any competition run by the prize promoters
- The e-mail may be personally addressed to you but it has been posted using bulk mail sending facilities to many others locally and internationally

- Check the wording of letter; you may notice spelling errors and exaggerations, which should alert you to the offer being too good to be true
- Logos of the organisations mentioned in the letter (such as the prize-givers) may not seem correct or professionally drafted
- The names of persons used as senders of the e-mails are common.

Issued by Minister of Finance
10 August 2012