

## SEC Warns Investors and Financial Firms of Government Impersonators

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**2009-39**

*Washington, D.C., March 2, 2009* — The Securities and Exchange Commission today is warning investors and financial services firms about con-artists who may use the names of actual SEC employees to mislead potential victims. The agency also is providing information to help potential victims protect themselves from SEC impersonators.

In some instances, investors in the U.S. and abroad have been tricked into revealing private information, giving fraudsters access to their brokerage accounts, and even sending money and other assets to imposters. In other instances, unknown individuals have attempted to impersonate SEC examiners to gather confidential information from broker-dealers and investment advisers. Imposters have contacted firms by telephone, identified themselves as members of the SEC staff, and demanded immediate access to the firm's records, sometimes claiming to be conducting an "emergency" examination.

Investors should be aware that the SEC never makes or endorses investment offers or participates in money transfers. Nor does the SEC send e-mails asking for detailed personal information, or financial information such as PIN numbers.

"Investors should be especially wary, in these turbulent times, of any unsolicited investment offer, and should always verify the credentials of the individuals making the offer," said Kristin J. Kaepplein, Director of the SEC's Office of Investor Education and Advocacy. "If contacted by someone claiming to represent the Securities and Exchange Commission and vouching for investments, it's a scam. The SEC never endorses or participates in investment offers."

Always verify the identity of someone claiming to be from the SEC. Ask for the caller's name, the SEC office in which they work, and their telephone number. Then verify the caller's identity by calling the SEC's personnel locator at 202-551-6000 and asking to speak directly to that SEC staff member.

If contacted by someone unfamiliar to you claiming to be an SEC employee, please report it to the SEC by calling 800-732-0330 or e-mailing: [help@sec.gov](mailto:help@sec.gov). If a caller claiming to be an SEC examiner is found not to be a member of the SEC's staff, please report the incident to the SEC's Examination Hotline at (202) 551-EXAM. Most importantly, if the caller is suspicious and can't be verified, do not share any information. Similarly, if the caller resists providing proof of identity, or efforts to reach the caller through a published SEC telephone number are unsuccessful, do not give the caller any information.