

Steps to Take to Protect Yourself

- **Take a breather.** A good investment almost always will be as good tomorrow as it is today. Take time to investigate any investment proposal thoroughly.
- **Remember that the person on the other end of the phone is a salesperson.** The first priority of people who sell investments is not your financial future, but rather to make money for themselves and their employers. This does not mean that all people who promote investments are dishonest, just that their goals may not be the same as yours.
- **Know the deal.** Insist upon written material and read it. Seek advice from someone who knows more than you do about investing, such as a broker, accountant, banker or a friend who has enjoyed some success in investing.
- **Check out the salesperson and firm.** For securities investments, you can get this information from the Iowa Insurance Division at 1-877-955-1212. For futures investing, call the National Futures Association's Disciplinary Information Access Line at 1-800-676-4NFA or www.nfa.futures.org
- **Stick with investments you understand** particularly when it comes to their potential risks or rewards. Do not get caught in the trap of trusting a salesperson who claims to understand it all and promises to take care of you.
- **Do not sign papers you have not read or do not understand.** Do not sign forms that have not been completely filled out. Have a lawyer or another knowledgeable person look at any agreement about which you have questions.
- **Be skeptical.** Ask questions about the nature of the investment. Where exactly is your money going? How much will the salesperson get in fees and/or commissions if you invest? What is the track record of the investment? Don't sit still for mumbo-jumbo or double-talk. When it comes to your life savings, the only dumb questions are the ones that you do not ask.