

Share Fraud Alert

CRH investors should be vigilant to potential scams targeted at shareholders in Irish and other public companies.

How share frauds/scams operate

These frauds, commonly referred to as “boiler room scams” are operated by individuals and companies who contact investors unexpectedly and offer to buy their shares at prices higher than current market value. They can obtain investor information, such as address and shareholding details, by accessing shareholder lists which are required by Irish company law to be publicly available. While “cold-calling” by telephone is the most common form of contact they may also use email, post, face-to-face contact or approach investors at seminars.

These individuals often use high pressure sales tactics and tell investors that they need to make a quick decision or miss out on a deal which will give them a large return on their investment. The offer to purchase shares will likely come with a request for bank details or money up front as a bond or other form of security, which will be accompanied by a guarantee to pay back the money involved if the sale does not go ahead. This advance fee is part of the scam – investors are unlikely to hear from them again.

What to do if you're contacted

If you are in receipt of an unsolicited call from someone offering to buy your shares you should:

- Remain vigilant – if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!
- Take a note of the name of the person and organisation that has contacted you.
- Do not respond to high pressure tactics to provide bank details or arrange to transfer money if you are unsure of the bona fide nature of the caller.
- Check if the company or individual is appropriately authorised to operate as an investment firm in Ireland by the Central Bank of Ireland. The list of authorised investment firms is available on the following website: <http://registers.financialregulator.ie/>. A list of unauthorised firms that the Central Bank has issued Warning Notices on, together with a form to report a suspected unauthorised firm, is available in the following section of the Central Bank's website, <http://www.centralbank.ie/regulation/unauthorised-firms/Pages/default.aspx>. Alternatively investors may contact the Central Bank on +353 (0)1 224 4000.
- Obtain independent advice from a qualified advisor or stockbroker.