



Superannuation scams

Scammers who want your super

An offer to help you get your superannuation money early might seem like a great idea. But if you agree to it you could end up in a lot of trouble. Accessing your super before age 55 (at the earliest) is illegal except in very limited circumstances.

Here we explain how super scams operate so you can protect your retirement savings.

How super scams operate

The scammers say they can withdraw your super or move it to a self-managed super fund (SMSF) so you can pay off your debts or use the money for something you really want.

Once your super has been withdrawn or transferred, the scammer then takes a large commission or may even steal the entire amount for themselves.

By agreeing to the scam, you risk losing your hard-earned super savings. You may also unintentionally get caught up in tax

penalties as a result of taking your super early. The scammers may even get you to sign false statements, exposing you to fines.

To find out more about when you can get hold of your super money, see ASIC's page on getting your super - <https://www.moneysmart.gov.au/superannuation-and-retirement/how-super-works/getting-your-super>.

There is another type of super scam where scammers steal your identity and pretend to be you so they can transfer your super to a fake SMSF that they can access. Read more about how to protect yourself from this scam on ASIC's identity fraud webpage -

<https://www.moneysmart.gov.au/scams/identity-fraud>.

Who the scammers target

Promoters of illegal super scams often target people who are struggling with debt, people who are unemployed and those from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Warning signs of a super scam

Promoters of illegal super schemes will try to get you to believe that anyone can access their super with their help.

Be alert to these signs of a super scam:

- Advertisements promoting early access to super
- Offers to 'take control' of your super
- Offers of quick and easy ways to access or 'unlock' super
- Unlicensed operators - see ASIC Connect's Professional Registers or APRA's Disqualification Register.

If you have been approached about accessing your super early, report it to ASIC via the online complaint form or by calling ASIC's Infoline on 1300 300 630. You can also report it to the Australian Taxation Office by phoning 13 10 20.

When early release of super is legal

Early release of super is legal only in very limited circumstances: when you are experiencing financial hardship or on 'compassionate grounds' and even then you may not be able to access your entire super balance. For more information, refer back to ASIC's getting your super webpage.

Super is money for your retirement and not money for now. Talk to us now if you have any queries about when you can access your super or if you are currently experiencing hardship and are considering withdrawing your super on 'compassionate grounds'.

Source:

<https://www.moneysmart.gov.au/scams/supera-nuation-scams>

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