September 25, 2026

Finfluencers: What Canadian Securities Regulators Want You to Know

The Canadian Securities Administrators ("**CSA**") and the Canadian Investment Regulatory Organization ("**CIRO**") have released a joint staff notice (the "**Notice**") addressing "finfluencers" – individuals who offer financial, investment, or other money management advice through social media. 1 The Notice is intended to help these individuals, and the firms that work with them, understand and comply with applicable securities laws when posting investment-related content online.

What Is a Finfluencer?

The British Columbia Securities Commission ("**BCSC**") notes that social media has become an increasingly important source of financial information for Canadians, with finfluencers playing a growing role in shaping investment conversations.[2]

As CSA Chair Stan Magidson stated, "Finfluencers can have an impact on how people make investment decisions, and this comes with substantial responsibilities. This guidance helps content creators protect themselves and their followers by making sure their content complies with securities laws."

The Notice defines a finfluencer as someone who creates content on social media, blogs, or similar online platforms and offers guidance on managing money, investing, or achieving financial goals, often to a large audience. Finfluencers' reach can provide meaningful benefits, including raising awareness of common investment scams and helping investors identify and avoid them.

However, the Notice also highlights the associated risks. The broad distribution of financial content can facilitate the spread of misinformation, leave conflicts of interest undisclosed, and expose investors to harm ranging from poor investment returns to outright fraud.

The Notice describes securities laws as "in many respects, principles-based, which makes them adaptable to new ways of delivering investment services." Accordingly, securities laws apply to finfluencer activity regardless of the medium used, whether videos, written posts, or other forms of online content. They may also apply even where the finfluencer is not a real person. A computer-generated avatar or artificial intelligence ("**AI**") chatbot promoting investments is treated no differently – if someone deploys AI to give investment advice or promote securities, that person can be held responsible for the AI-generated content as though they had created it themselves.

How Securities Laws Apply to Finfluencers

1. Registration Requirements

A core investor-protection mechanism in securities law requires individuals and firms to register with securities regulators if they encourage others to rely on them for investment advice or trading services.

"Advice" includes offering an opinion on the merits of investing in a business or its securities or making a recommendation about such an investment.

"Trading" is defined broadly. It captures not only the execution of a purchase or sale but also any act, advertisement, solicitation, conduct, or negotiation undertaken in furtherance of a sale of securities. Where advice is given, or trading activity is undertaken for a business purpose, registration is required. Whether a business purpose exists is a factual determination, guided by factors such as:

a) Acting like a registrant – engaging in, or representing yourself as engaging in, the business of advising on or trading securities

b) Acting like a registrant – engaging in, or representing yourself as engaging in, the business of advising on or trading securities

[1]Canadian Securities Administrators, "Finfluencers", online: https://www.securities-administrators.ca/investor-tools/finfluencers

[2] BCSC, "CSA and CIRO Provide Guidance for Finfluencers and Firms on How to Work with Them and Protect Investors" (2025), online: https://www.bcsc.bc.ca/about/media-room/news-releases/2025/89-csa-and-ciro-provide-guidance-for-finfluencers-and-firms-on-how-to-work-with-them-and-protect-investors

Sangra Moller LLP
Suite 2200, 1021 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, British Columbia
Canada V6E 0C3
Tel: 604-662-8808
Fax: 604-669-8803
www.sangra.com

c) Acting like a registrant – engaging in, or representing yourself as engaging in, the business of advising on or trading securities

d) Intermediating trades – connecting buyers and sellers to arrange trades, or acting as a market maker

e) Repetition, regularity, or continuity - carrying on the activity on an ongoing basis, directly or indirectly

f) Compensation – being, or expecting to be, paid or compensated in any form, regardless of whether payment is received

g) Solicitation – directly or indirectly contacting others to solicit securities transactions or offer advice

The guidance notes that there is a limited scope "general advice" exemption that covers advice not tailored to an individual's specific needs. Finfluencers relying on this exemption must still clearly disclose, in a timely and tailored manner, any financial interest they hold in the securities discussed and any compensation arrangements connected to the content.

In short, the Notice indicates that a person trading securities or giving investment advice for a business purpose is required to register with the applicable securities regulator, absent an available exemption.

2. Marketing, Promotion, and Referral Activities

A finfluencer who is paid to promote the services of a registered dealer or adviser may be participating in a "referral arrangement," which is subject to specific regulatory requirements. Similarly, a finfluencer who is paid to promote particular securities or perform investor-relations activities may be considered to be acting on behalf of an issuer or registrant.

These activities can have significant legal consequences. They may bring the finfluencer within the scope of securities laws governing the distribution of securities, which is a complex regulatory regime that imposes substantial penalties for non-compliance. For example, finfluencers paid by issuers have faced sanctions for promoting securities without clearly and prominently disclosing their compensation or relationship with the issuer.

In September 2025, the Alberta Securities Commission banned a finfluencer and his company from participating in the Alberta capital markets for two years, imposing a $30,000 administrative penalty and costs of approximately $10,000 for failing to disclose that social media posts promoting certain issuers were paid advertisements.[3]

3. Prohibited Conduct

Even where the general advice exemption applies, and registration isn't required, other securities law prohibitions still apply:

Misrepresentations – Securities laws prohibit statements a person knows, or reasonably ought to know, are untrue or misleading with respect to a fact (or omission) likely to affect a reasonable investor's decision, or that could reasonably be expected to materially affect a security's market price or value.

Market manipulation – Manipulative or deceptive trading activity is prohibited, including conduct that creates misleading pricing or trading activity harmful to investors and market integrity. A classic example is a pump-and-dump scheme, where shares are bought at a low price, artificially inflated through false or misleading statements, then sold off at a profit. The Notice cautions finfluencers against being drawn – even unknowingly – into arrangements with fraudsters engaged in this kind of manipulation.

Key Takeaways

The Notice serves as a reminder that securities laws can apply to investment-related content regardless of the platform, format, or technology used to create it. Depending on the nature of their activities, finfluencers may need to consider requirements relating to registration, conflicts of interest, referrals, promotions, misrepresentations, and market manipulation. The Alberta Securities Commission's recent enforcement action demonstrates that these principles are already being applied, with further regulatory and enforcement developments likely to follow.

[3] ASC, "ASC Sanctions 'Finfluencer' James Domenic Floreani and Jayconomics Inc. for Breaching Alberta Securities Laws" (2025), online: https://www.asc.ca/en/news-and-publications/news-releases/2025/09/29-asc-sanctions-james-domenic-floreani-and-jayconomics-for-breaching-alberta-securities-laws