

24 March 2020

MFSA issues guidance to consumers on the use of financial services during these extraordinary times

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Malta Financial Services Authority (MFSA) has issued [a set of guidelines](#) to consumers, also outlining the measures it has put in place to safeguard their interests during such extraordinary times.

These guidelines complement the continued efforts being made by the Authority in its engagement with authorised firms to understand the potential impact which COVID-19 is having on their business and clients. Through the publication of regulatory updates, the MFSA's priority is to ensure that authorised firms have contingency plans in place to keep offering their services as close to normal as possible but also continue to treat customers fairly.

When it comes to banking services, customers are being encouraged to make more use of online and mobile banking services in view of the social distancing guidelines issued by the Health Authorities. Consumers are also being made aware of a potential surge in internet purchases and are advised to be vigilant of their own security online, when making payments.

For those consumers who are considering either investing, buying or selling an investment, caution is being advocated in taking these decisions in times like these, since information may be outdated in a matter of days and forecasts may prove unreliable. Generally, it is highly recommended that investors consult a licensed financial intermediary before investing.

Insurance policy holders are being guided on the various measures which are being taken by the MFSA in relation to the different types of insurance policies which could be affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. To this effect, a separate [Circular](#) has also been issued, addressing in more detail the levels of coverage for each type of insurance and the applicable terms for the most common situations faced by policy holders, as a result of the current pandemic. For travel insurance specifically, guidance is being given on actions consumers should take in the event of a holiday cancellation, self-isolation and when making travel plans.

During these times, the general public is also being advised to be cautious of fraudulent schemes or financial scams which may try to take advantage of the COVID-19 outbreak to misappropriate funds or obtain sensitive personal information. Caution should be taken when being presented with social media adverts which give advice in relation to investments in developing cures, request donations, promote medical and health insurance policies for COVID-19, offer sale of supplies, and entities which use fake/phishing websites or emails with malicious content. Any suspicious activity should be reported immediately to the MFSA via <https://www.mfsa.mt/about-us/contact/>

As events unfold, the general public is encouraged to keep following updates on financial products and heed advice on their relationship with financial services providers through a dedicated section on the [MFSA website](#).

About MFSA

The Malta Financial Services Authority (MFSA) is the single regulator of financial services in Malta, covering banks, insurance companies, investment services, trusts and pensions. As of 2018, the MFSA became the first European regulator to develop a framework to regulate virtual financial assets. The MFSA's mission, as enshrined in its Vision 2021, is to enhance its position as an independent, proactive and trustworthy supervisory authority with the main purpose of safeguarding the integrity of markets and maintaining stability within the financial sector, for the benefit and protection of consumers. Over 2,300 entities are licensed by the MFSA to operate in the financial services sector, which makes up 11% of the Maltese Gross Domestic Product.



@MFSA safeguarding consumer interests by issuing guidance on financial services and products #covid-19