

Dear Stewart Partners,

As we head into the long weekend to enjoy some time off from work, and more importantly commemorate the men and women who died while in military service to our country, we want to remind you that days before the long holiday weekends present an exponentially higher risk of wire fraud. Please read the Secret Service alert by using the link included in this email and remind your staff to always confirm all wire instructions.

In addition to being on high alert for potential wire fraud scams, in this week's update we are highlighting Stewart's Special Alert Database, which combines both Government SDN lists and Stewart's Special Alert bulletins in one place. Lastly, on the real estate market front, we found an interesting article in The Wall Street Journal about the second home, higher end, real estate market in vacation spots, like Cape Cod. For those house hunters, that Cape home is becoming elusive.

- *Secret Service – Fraud Advisory: Wire Transfer Scheme Targeting Mortgage Payoffs*

The Secret Service recently issued a new advisory alerting the public of the increased schemes targeting mortgage payoff funds. The scheme involves the impersonation of the mortgage lender or the alteration of wire instructions on a payoff statement provided to the consumer or closing agent. The Secret Service advises that the first step to prevention is to verify the information prior to releasing any funds and restrict wire payoffs to known and previously verified accounts. To read the bulletin and all preventive measures to avoid losses on this scheme, please view the alert at ALTA's website: <https://www.alta.org/file.cfm?name=Wire-Fraud-Alert>.

- *Stewart's Special Alert Database*

Stewart maintains a searchable database that includes both individuals on the SDN (Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons) sanctions list, maintained by the Office of Foreign Assets Control, a division of the U.S. Department of the Treasury. The database also includes the names of individuals that are the subject of Special Alerts by Stewart. As an issuing agent, the names of all the parties in your transaction, including those receiving funds at closing, must be searched. To access the database, simply follow this link: <https://specialalerts.stewart.com/> In the event you have a hit on a name or an address, call or email one of our underwriters. Not all hits will prevent you from closing the transaction, but it must be cleared.

- *Covid's Impact on the Cape Cod Housing Market*

All who work in real estate know that the inventory is way down and the demand is high. An investigative report by The Wall Street Journal revealed that the most significant inventory drops occurred in vacation destinations, such as the Cape. On the flip side, the high-end luxury market of urban areas of New York City and Boston saw large increases of inventory during the Covid-19 pandemic. To read the full article and view an interactive map, follow this link: [In Housing Markets Like Cape Cod and the Jersey Shore, Homes for Sale Disappeared During Covid - WSJ](#)

- [Stewart's Massachusetts COVID-19 Resource Page](#)

Please view our resource page which contains all the local information relative to underwriting guidance, affidavits, registry closures and frequently asked questions. This site will be updated regularly. To access click [HERE](#) and make it a favorite on your web-browser. You can also copy the following URL and paste it into your web browser:

<https://www.stewart.com/content/stewart/stewartcom/en/stg/massachusetts/underwriting-resources/forms-policy-information/covid-19-info-resources.html>

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