



SECURITY & RECOVERY

Crypto Exchange Source of Funds: How & Why Exchanges Check

By Matt Barnez

Written

Jun 14, 2026

Introduction

A source of funds check can be one of the most confusing moments for a crypto exchange user.

You may already have verified your identity. You may have uploaded your ID, completed facial verification, and used the platform normally for months. Then suddenly, before a withdrawal, after a large deposit, or during an account review, the exchange asks a new question:

Where did these funds come from?

For many users, this feels frustrating. Some think the exchange is being too strict. Others worry that their account will be frozen or that they have done something wrong. In reality, a source of funds check is usually part of a broader compliance and risk-control process used by regulated financial platforms.

It does not always mean the user is guilty of anything. It usually means the exchange needs to understand the origin of the money or crypto assets involved in the account activity.

This guide explains what a source-of-funds check is, why crypto exchanges ask for it, which documents may be requested, what can trigger a review, and how users should respond clearly and practically.

What Is a Source of Funds Check in Crypto?

A source of funds check is a review that helps a crypto exchange understand where the money or crypto assets used in an account came from.

In simple terms, the exchange wants to know how the user obtained the funds.

For example, the funds may come from:

- Salary or employment income
- Business income
- Freelance or consulting work
- Sale of property
- Sale of investments

- Savings
- Inheritance
- A loan
- A gift
- Crypto purchased on another exchange
- Trading profits
- Mining, staking, or other crypto-related activity

The purpose is not only to see which wallet or bank account sent the money. The deeper question is how the user originally acquired those funds.

For example, if a user deposits crypto from an external wallet, the exchange may want to know whether that crypto came from a previous exchange purchase, a long-term investment, mining income, trading activity, or another source.

This is important because crypto transactions can move quickly across borders, wallets, and platforms. A deposit may arrive from a clean-looking wallet, but the exchange may still need to understand the broader background of the funds if the transaction appears unusual or high-risk.

Source of Funds vs Source of Wealth



Source of funds and source of wealth are related, but they are not the same.

Source of funds usually refers to the origin of the specific money or assets used in a transaction or account activity.

Source of wealth refers to the broader way a person has built their overall financial position over time.

For example:

If a user deposits \$20,000 into a crypto exchange from a bank account, the source of funds may be salary savings from the past two years.

If the exchange asks about the user's source of wealth, the answer may include employment history, business ownership, investment returns, property ownership, or long-term savings.

In crypto exchange reviews, the source of funds is usually the more common request because the platform wants to understand the origin of the funds connected to a particular deposit, withdrawal, or account balance.

However, in higher-risk cases, an exchange may also ask for the source of wealth information to understand the bigger financial picture.

Why Do Crypto Exchanges Ask for Source of Funds?

Crypto exchanges ask for the source of funds because they operate in an environment where money laundering, fraud, sanctions violations, scams, and stolen assets are real risks.

A regulated exchange cannot simply accept every deposit or process every withdrawal without understanding risk. If the platform allows suspicious funds to move through its system, it may face regulatory penalties, banking problems, legal issues, or reputational damage.

There are several main reasons exchanges ask for the source of funds.

1. Anti-Money Laundering Compliance

Anti-money laundering rules are one of the biggest reasons exchanges ask for the source of funds.

Money laundering is the process of trying to make illegally obtained funds appear legitimate. Crypto can be attractive to criminals because funds can move across wallets, exchanges, blockchains, and countries faster than traditional banking systems.

Exchanges are expected to detect and prevent this type of abuse.

A source of funds check helps the exchange understand whether the user's activity makes sense and whether the funds appear to come from a legitimate source.

For example, if a user claims to be a small retail trader but suddenly deposits a very large amount of crypto from several unrelated wallets, the exchange may need more information before allowing full access.

The goal is to make sure the platform is not being used to move criminal proceeds.

2. Fraud Prevention

Source of funds checks can also help exchanges identify fraud.

Fraud risk may appear when funds come from hacked accounts, stolen cards, mule accounts, phishing victims, fake investment schemes, or suspicious third parties.

For example, if an account receives funds from many unrelated people and then quickly tries to withdraw crypto, the exchange may see this as a possible fraud pattern.

In that case, asking for the source of funds is not just about regulation. It is also about protecting victims, protecting the platform, and preventing the account from being used as part of a larger fraud network.

3. Sanctions and High-Risk Activity Screening

Crypto exchanges also need to avoid dealing with sanctioned individuals, sanctioned entities, or high-risk jurisdictions.

Because crypto transactions can involve external wallets, mixers, bridges, decentralized platforms, and cross-border transfers, exchanges often use transaction monitoring systems to identify risky activity.

If funds appear connected to high-risk wallets, sanctioned addresses, dark markets, scams, or suspicious services, the exchange may ask the user to explain the origin of the assets.

This does not automatically mean the user is a criminal. Sometimes users receive crypto without fully understanding its previous transaction history. But from the exchange's perspective, unclear or risky fund origins need to be reviewed.

4. Risk-Based Customer Monitoring

KYC is not always a one-time process. Many exchanges continue to monitor account activity after the initial sign-up.

This means a user can pass identity verification and still face a source of funds request later.

The reason is simple: risk can change over time.

A user may begin with small deposits and normal trading activity. Months later, the same account may receive large transfers, interact with higher-risk wallets, or show activity that does not match the original profile.

When that happens, the exchange may ask for updated information or supporting documents.

This is known as ongoing due diligence or ongoing customer monitoring.

5. Banking and Payment Partner Requirements

Crypto exchanges often depend on banks, payment processors, card networks, and fiat payment rails.

These partners may require the exchange to maintain strong compliance controls. If the exchange cannot show that it understands user activity and fund origins, it may lose access to banking services.

This is especially important when users deposit or withdraw fiat currencies such as USD, EUR, or GBP.

Even if the user sees the process as a crypto exchange issue, the source of funds request may be connected to the exchange's relationship with banks and payment providers.

When Do Exchanges Usually Ask for the Source of Funds?



A source of funds check can happen at different stages of the user journey.

It may happen before account approval, after a large deposit, during a withdrawal review, or after unusual account activity.

Here are the most common triggers.

Large Deposits

Large deposits are one of the most common reasons for source of funds checks.

If a user deposits an amount that is much higher than their previous activity, the exchange may want to understand where the funds came from.

This is especially likely if the deposit is large compared with the user's stated income, account history, or normal trading behavior.

The exact threshold is usually not public. Exchanges often avoid revealing specific limits because users could try to structure transactions to avoid review.

Large Withdrawals

A source of funds check may also happen before a large withdrawal.

From the user's point of view, this can be stressful because it may feel like the exchange is blocking access to their own money.

From the exchange's point of view, a large withdrawal may be the final point where the platform can review risk before funds leave the system.

If the exchange has concerns about how the assets were obtained, it may pause the withdrawal and request documentation.

Sudden Change in Account Activity

An exchange may ask for the source of funds when user behavior changes suddenly.

Examples include:

- A long-inactive account suddenly becomes active
- Small deposits are replaced by large transfers
- The user starts moving funds rapidly between wallets
- The user begins using new payment methods
- The user changes countries or login locations frequently
- The account starts interacting with higher-risk crypto addresses

The issue is not always the action itself. The issue is whether the activity looks consistent with the user's normal profile.

Deposits From External Wallets

Deposits from external crypto wallets can sometimes trigger extra review.

This is because the exchange may not know who controls the wallet, how the assets were obtained, or whether the wallet has interacted with risky services in the past.

If the blockchain history is complex, the exchange may ask the user to explain the source of the crypto and provide supporting evidence.

For example, a user may need to show that the crypto was originally purchased on another exchange, earned through mining, received as salary, or transferred from a personal wallet.

Use of Multiple Platforms

Users who move funds across several exchanges, wallets, bridges, and DeFi protocols may face more questions.

This does not automatically mean their activity is suspicious. Many experienced crypto users use multiple platforms.

However, from a compliance perspective, complex transaction paths can be harder to understand.

If the exchange cannot easily follow the origin of the funds, it may ask for a clearer explanation.

Mismatch Between Profile and Activity

Exchanges may compare user activity with the information they already have.

If a user's activity does not match their profile, a review may be triggered.

For example:

- A student account receives very large deposits
- A user with low stated income starts moving high-value assets
- A retail account behaves like a business account
- A personal account receives funds from many unrelated third parties

In these cases, the exchange may ask for source of funds documents to understand whether the activity is legitimate.

What Documents Can Prove the Source of Funds?



The documents required depend on the source of the money or crypto.

There is no single document that works for every situation. The key is to provide evidence that clearly connects the funds to a legitimate origin.

Below are common examples.

Salary or Employment Income

If the funds came from employment income, the exchange may ask for:

- Payslips
- Employment contract
- Bank statements showing salary deposits
- Tax documents
- Employer confirmation letter

The strongest documents usually show the user's name, employer, payment amount, and dates.

Business Income

If the funds came from a business, possible documents include:

- Business bank statements
- Company financial statements
- Invoices
- Tax filings
- Business registration documents
- Contracts with clients
- Proof of ownership or directorship

The exchange may want to see how the business generated the funds and how the money moved from the business to the user.

Freelance or Consulting Income

Freelancers may need to provide:

- Client invoices
- Payment receipts
- Bank statements
- Contracts or service agreements
- Tax documents
- Platform earnings reports

For example, if a user earned income through a freelance platform, a platform statement plus bank deposits may help support the explanation.

Sale of Property

If the funds came from selling property, the user may provide:

- Sale agreement
- Completion statement
- Land registry or ownership documents
- Bank statement showing sale proceeds
- Tax records related to the sale

The documents should show that the user owned the property and received funds from the sale.

Sale of Investments

If the funds came from selling stocks, bonds, funds, or other investments, useful documents may include:

- Brokerage statements
- Trade confirmations
- Portfolio statements
- Bank statements showing the withdrawal of proceeds
- Tax records

The goal is to show that the funds came from legitimate investment activity.

Inheritance

If the funds came from an inheritance, the exchange may ask for:

- Will or probate documents
- Letter from a lawyer or executor
- Bank statement showing received funds

- Estate distribution documents

Inheritance cases can take longer because documentation may vary by country.

Gift

If the funds came from a gift, possible documents include:

- Gift letter
- Donor's bank statement
- User's bank statement showing receipt
- Explanation of the relationship between donor and recipient

Some exchanges may apply extra scrutiny to large gifts because gifts can be used to hide the real source of funds.

Loan

If the funds came from a loan, useful documents include:

- Loan agreement
- Bank statement showing loan disbursement
- Lender details
- Repayment schedule
- Proof that the lender is legitimate

A formal bank loan is usually easier to explain than an informal private loan.

Crypto Purchased on Another Exchange

If the funds are crypto assets purchased on another exchange, the user may provide:

- Transaction history from the previous exchange
- Buy order confirmations
- Deposit and withdrawal records
- Bank statement showing fiat deposit to the previous exchange
- Wallet transaction IDs

The user should try to connect the full path: money entering the first exchange, crypto purchase, withdrawal to the wallet, and deposit into the current exchange.

Crypto Trading Profits

If the funds came from trading profits, documents may include:

- Exchange trading history
- Account statements
- Profit and loss reports
- Tax reports
- Wallet transfer records

The challenge with trading profits is that many users trade across multiple platforms. In that case, a clear summary can help the exchange understand the history.

Mining, Staking, or Crypto Rewards

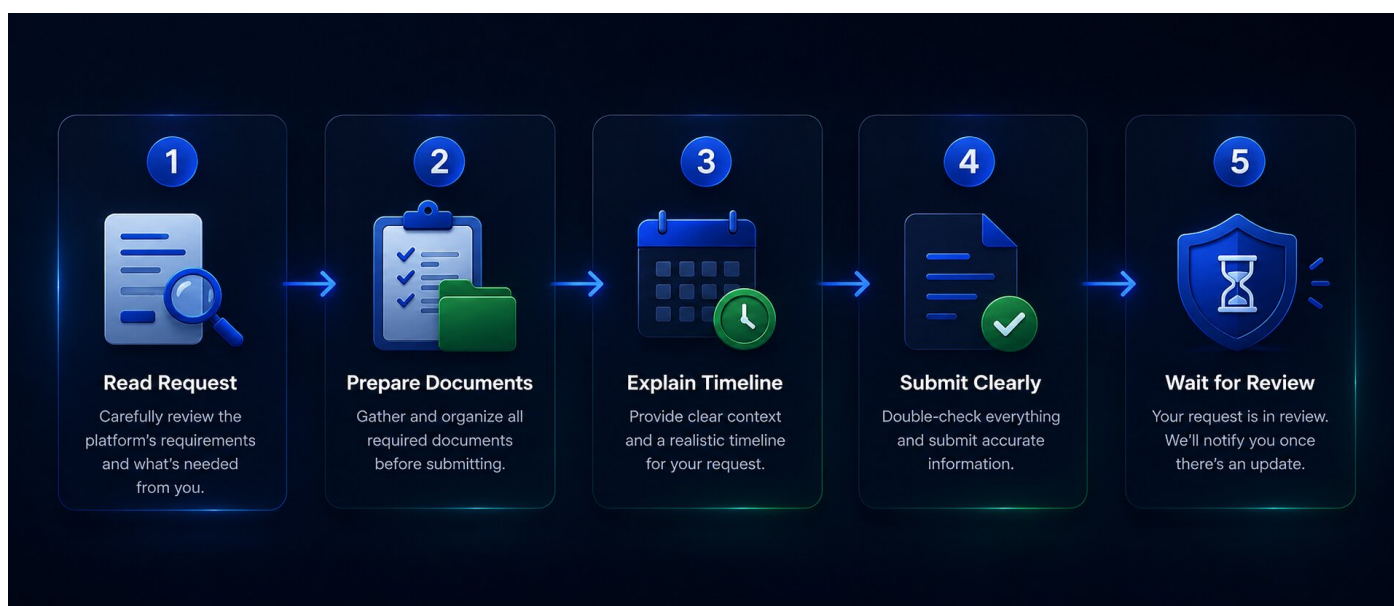
If the funds came from mining, staking, validator rewards, or similar crypto income, the user may provide:

- Mining pool statements
- Wallet records
- Staking reward history

- Validator dashboard exports
- Tax reports
- Screenshots or downloadable reports from platforms

The explanation should show how the rewards were generated and how they reached the exchange account.

How Users Should Respond to a Source of Funds Request



A source of funds request should be handled carefully. A poor response can delay the review, create more questions, or increase the risk of account restrictions.

Here is a practical approach.

1. Do Not Ignore the Request

Ignoring a source of funds request is one of the worst responses.

If the exchange has asked for documents, the account may already be under review. If the user does not respond, withdrawals or account functions may remain limited.

Even if the user needs more time, it is better to reply and explain that documents are being prepared.

2. Read the Request Carefully

Before uploading anything, read exactly what the exchange is asking for.

Some users send random documents that do not answer the request. This can slow down the process.

For example, if the exchange asks for proof of salary income, sending only a wallet screenshot may not be enough.

If the exchange asks for proof of crypto purchase history, sending only a bank statement may not show the full origin of the assets.

The response should match the request.

3. Provide a Clear Written Explanation

Documents are important, but the explanation matters too.

A good explanation should be simple, direct, and consistent.

For example:

“The funds deposited into my account came from employment income saved over the past two years. I transferred part of these savings from my bank account to Exchange A, purchased BTC in March 2024, withdrew it to my personal wallet, and later deposited it into this exchange.”

This kind of explanation helps the compliance team understand the story behind the documents.

4. Create a Timeline

A timeline can be very helpful, especially for crypto funds.

For example:

1. Salary received into the bank account
2. Bank transfer made to Exchange A
3. BTC purchased on Exchange A
4. BTC withdrawn to personal wallet

5. BTC held for several months
6. BTC deposited into the current exchange
7. Withdrawal requested

A timeline reduces confusion and makes the review easier.

5. Make Sure Documents Are Clear

Documents should be readable, complete, and not heavily edited.

The user should make sure:

- The full document is visible
- Name and date are visible
- Transaction amounts are visible
- The document is not blurry
- Screenshots are not cropped in a suspicious way
- File format follows the exchange's instructions

If redaction is allowed, users should only hide information that is not relevant and should avoid covering key details.

6. Keep the Explanation Consistent

Inconsistent explanations create problems.

If a user first says the funds came from salary, then later says they came from a gift, the exchange may ask more questions.

Before responding, users should review their records and make sure their explanation matches the documents.

7. Do Not Submit Fake Documents

Users should never submit fake or altered documents.

This can lead to account closure, permanent restrictions, loss of platform access, or legal consequences.

If documents are missing, it is better to explain the situation honestly and provide alternative evidence if possible.

8. Avoid Emotional or Aggressive Replies

It is understandable to feel frustrated when funds are delayed. However, aggressive messages usually do not help.

A clear and professional response is more effective.

The compliance team usually follows internal procedures. A calm response with organized documents gives the user the best chance of resolving the issue.

What If You Cannot provide the Requested Documents?

Sometimes users do not have perfect records.

This can happen when crypto was purchased years ago, when an old exchange closed, when bank records are no longer available, or when funds passed through several wallets.

If this happens, the user should not panic.

Instead, they should:

- Explain why the exact document is unavailable
- Provide alternative evidence
- Share wallet transaction IDs
- Provide old emails or account records
- Provide tax reports if available

- Give a clear written timeline
- Ask what alternative documents the exchange can accept

The exchange may still require certain documents, but a transparent explanation is better than silence or incomplete answers.

Can an Exchange Freeze Funds During a Source of Funds Check?

Yes, an exchange may temporarily restrict withdrawals or certain account functions during a source of funds review.

This does not always mean the funds are permanently frozen. In many cases, the restriction remains until the exchange completes the review.

However, the outcome depends on the case.

Possible outcomes include:

- The account is approved after documents are reviewed
- The exchange asks for more information
- Withdrawals remain limited until the review is complete
- The exchange closes the account and allows withdrawal to a verified destination
- The exchange refuses service if the risk is too high
- In serious cases, the platform may report suspicious activity to authorities

The best user response is to provide clear, truthful, and relevant information as quickly as possible.

Why Source of Funds Checks Feel Different Across Exchanges

Not every crypto exchange applies source of funds checks in the same way.

One platform may allow normal activity with minimal questions, while another may ask for detailed documents.

This can happen because exchanges differ in:

- Licensing requirements
- Countries served
- Banking relationships
- Risk appetite
- Products offered
- Transaction monitoring systems
- Internal compliance policies
- Regulatory pressure
- User risk profiles

An exchange that offers fiat deposits, withdrawals, derivatives, leverage, or high-volume trading may apply stricter controls than a smaller platform with limited services.

Also, users from certain countries or users interacting with high-risk wallets may face more detailed reviews.

This does not always mean one exchange is “better” or “worse.” It means compliance standards can vary widely depending on the platform’s risk model and legal environment.

Common Mistakes Users Make

Many sources of funds reviews become harder because users make avoidable mistakes.

Here are the most common ones.

Sending Unrelated Documents

Some users send documents that do not prove the origin of funds.

For example, a passport proves identity, but it does not prove where the money came from.

A wallet screenshot may show a balance, but it may not prove how the crypto was acquired.

The document must answer the actual question: where did the funds come from?

Providing Only Part of the Story

If funds moved through multiple steps, users need to explain the full path.

For example, saying “the funds came from my wallet” is usually not enough. The exchange may still ask how the assets entered that wallet in the first place.

A strong response connects the chain of events.

Using Third-Party Accounts

Deposits from third-party bank accounts or wallets can create additional risk.

If the funds came from someone else, the exchange may ask why that person sent the funds, what the relationship is, and whether the user is the beneficial owner.

This is why users should avoid using accounts or wallets that they do not control.

Poor Record Keeping

Many crypto users do not keep proper records until a problem happens.

This is risky.

Users should regularly save:

- Exchange statements
- Deposit records
- Withdrawal records
- Trading history
- Wallet addresses used
- Transaction hashes

- Bank transfers
- Tax reports
- Invoices or income documents

Good records make future reviews much easier.

Assuming KYC Approval Means No Future Checks

Passing KYC does not guarantee that an exchange will never ask more questions.

KYC verifies identity. Source-of-funds checks verify the origin of money or assets.

A user can pass KYC and still face a source of funds review later if their activity changes or if a transaction appears risky.

Best Practices Before a Source of Funds Review Happens

Users should not wait until an account is restricted to organize their records.

Here are practical steps that reduce future problems.

Keep a Personal Crypto Transaction File

Users should keep a simple file with important information:

- Exchanges used
- Wallet addresses controlled
- Major purchases
- Large transfers
- Trading reports
- Staking or mining income

- Fiat deposits and withdrawals
- Tax reports

This does not need to be complicated. Even a well-organized folder can help.

Avoid Mixing Personal and Business Funds

If a user trades personally, they should avoid mixing business funds, client funds, or third-party funds with personal exchange accounts.

Mixing funds can make source of funds explanations much harder.

If crypto activity is business-related, it may be better to use a business account where available.

Do Not Use Unclear Third-Party Transfers

Receiving deposits from unrelated people can create problems.

If funds are legitimate, the user should still keep records explaining why the money was received.

But in general, users should avoid using their exchange account to receive funds on behalf of others.

Save Records From Every Exchange

If a user moves crypto from Exchange A to Exchange B, they should save records from both platforms.

The receiving exchange may ask how the crypto was originally purchased or earned.

If the user no longer has access to the old account, the review becomes harder.

Keep Tax and Income Records

Tax reports, income documents, and bank statements can be useful for source of funds reviews.

Even if the exchange does not ask for tax documents first, they can help support the user's explanation in complex cases.

Is a Source of Funds Check a Bad Sign?

Not always.

A source of funds check can feel serious, but it is not automatically a sign that the user has done something wrong.

It may simply mean:

- The transaction is large
- The account activity changed
- The exchange needs updated records
- The deposit came from an external wallet
- The platform's compliance rules became stricter
- The user's activity triggered automated monitoring

However, users should take the request seriously. A weak or incomplete response can cause delays or further restrictions.

How to Write a Good Source of Funds Explanation

A good explanation should be short, factual, and supported by documents.

Here is a simple structure:

1. State the source of the funds
2. Explain how the funds were obtained
3. Explain how they moved to the exchange
4. List the documents provided
5. Offer to provide more information if needed

Example:

“The funds deposited into my account came from my employment income and personal savings. I received salary payments into my bank account from January 2023 to March 2025. In April 2025, I transferred part of these savings to Exchange A and purchased ETH. The ETH was later withdrawn to my personal wallet and then deposited into my account on this platform. I have attached bank statements, salary records, Exchange A transaction history, and wallet transaction IDs showing the movement of funds.”

This type of response is useful because it is direct, organized, and easy to verify.

Source of Funds Check vs Proof of Reserves

Some users confuse source of funds checks with proof of reserves.

They are completely different.

Proof of reserves is about whether the exchange has enough assets to cover customer balances. The source of funds is about where the user's money or crypto came from.

Proof of reserves focuses on the exchange.

The source of funds focuses on the customer's account activity.

Both are related to trust and risk, but they answer different questions.

Final Thoughts

A crypto exchange source of funds check can be frustrating, especially when it happens during a withdrawal or after a user has already completed identity verification.

But it is important to understand what the exchange is actually asking.

The platform is not only asking where the latest transfer came from. It may be asking how the funds were originally earned, purchased, saved, transferred, or accumulated.

For users, the best approach is simple: stay calm, respond clearly, provide relevant documents, and keep records before problems happen.

A source of funds request does not automatically mean the user is in trouble. But it does mean the exchange needs a clearer picture of the money or crypto moving through the account.

In crypto, ownership and access are not only about holding assets. They are also about being able to explain the history of those assets when a regulated platform asks.

Good records can make the difference between a smooth review and a stressful account restriction.