Know Your Hard Forks

Unless you are a developer, the term 'hard fork' may carry a lot of confusing and potentially negative connotations for you. After all, you may have read an article or two about hard forks and how it created contention or drama among certain crypto projects. Monero's hard forks manifest in interesting ways and fall into three main categories:

1) Network Upgrade/Regularly Scheduled Hard Fork
Monero developers aim to schedule two regular hard forks per year. These hard forks are always done by community consensus and led by Monero core developers. They typically include several improvements to the core Monero code. It is imperative as a Monero user that you upgrade your Monero wallet/s every time this occurs, and it is no one's responsibility to do so but your own. No one said being an early adopter was easy, but if you are paying attention, it's not hard either.

Other projects have used Monero's regularly scheduled hard forks to their own advantage and created their own projects on Monero's old chains. These projects often fail in short time, and feed upon the greedy nature of individuals. If you fail to update your Monero wallet after one of these hard forks and send your XMR, you may end up losing them on a different chain or having to spend a significant amount of time trying to recover them.

Safety level: Best practice is to upgrade your Monero wallet(s) as soon as updates are released.

2) Hard Fork of New and Legitimate Projects
Some legitimate projects will fork away from Monero, utilizing its underlying code to pursue their own goals. There are a few factors to look for when determining whether the project is legitimate.

 • No pre-mine or insta-mine of coins for the developers
 • No requirement to share your Monero private keys
 • No controversy or excessive negative or alarming reviews by the Monero community about the project
 • The project is open-sourced to 'give back' to Monero

Safety level: If it's legitimate, you will not be required to do anything with your Monero wallet(s) and you can join the new project following your best judgement.

3) Scam or Attack Hard Forks
These projects will look like the opposite of what was mentioned in the legitimate project section. These projects are motivated by greed, both on the side of the developers and on the side of the users (read victims). In some cases, particularly in the case of projects asking individuals to share their private keys, they may be a deceptive attempt to attack the Monero network itself and weaken the privacy/anonymity of its users.

Safety level: Strongly recommended to avoid these coins. Proceed at your own risk and be aware that participation may also inadvertently weaken the Monero network.