



Five Cybersecurity Tips to Keep Your Accounts Secure

It seems that not a day goes by without a high-profile data breach involving millions of usernames, passwords, and other sensitive records.

To protect yourself online, we recommend taking five basic precautions. This is not an exhaustive list, but is a good starting point to combat the threats you may face in an increasingly complex online environment:

- **Understand that identity thieves and cybercriminals try to intimidate you or rush you into making a bad decision.** They will say, for example, “We are shutting down your account in two hours unless you buy gift cards and give us the code.” If you receive an email or phone call you find threatening, it is best to call the company directly or log on via your account as you normally do instead of opening suspicious links or suspicious attachments.
- **Use “long and strong” passwords. The longer the password, the better.** Use words that do not have any meaning when connected together. For example, “FinanceTelevisionDrumroll2021” is stronger than “@bc!23” even with the two special characters (@ and !). Also, try not to include words or numbers in your passwords that can be found about you online - such as your address, phone number, or pet’s name (which might be found on social media).
- **Do not use the same passwords for different accounts.** Consider using a password manager to keep track of your passwords. Google Chrome and other web browsers can generate secure passwords for you and save them.
- **Use antivirus and regularly back up important files.** Some antivirus software packages include data recovery capabilities. Backing up your files is a particularly good defense against ransomware, an attack in which criminals take control of your computer or your network and demand a ransom to restore your files.
- **Update your software.** Patching your operating system and the applications you use (such as Zoom or Microsoft Office) can mitigate the chances you will be exposed to vulnerabilities that hackers can exploit.

As more and more of our lives shift online, we recommend taking the time to ensure that you are protected from identity thieves and cybercriminals.

As always, we are available for questions as they arise and look forward to helping you feel great about the security of your accounts.