

# SAFEGUARD YOUR DATA

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## Simple steps to protect sensitive data!

*Follow good security habits – Review security tips for ways to protect yourself and your data.*

- 1. Use and maintain anti-virus and end-point software and a firewall.** These protect against viruses and Trojan horses that may steal or modify the data on your computer.
- 2. Regularly scan your computer for spyware.** Spyware or adware hidden in software may affect the performance of your computer and give attackers access to your data.
- 3. Keep software up to date.** Install software patches so that attackers cannot take advantage of known problems or vulnerabilities.
- 4. Evaluate your software's settings.** The default settings of most software enable all available functionality. However, attackers may be able to use this functionality to access your computer. It is especially important to check the settings for software that connects to the internet. Apply the highest level of security that still gives you the functionality you need.
- 5. Remove unused software programs.** If you have programs on your computer that you do not use, consider uninstalling them. These programs may contain vulnerabilities that, if not patched, may allow an attacker to access your computer, and waste system resources.
- 6. Consider creating separate user accounts.** While this approach will not completely isolate each area, it does offer some additional protection. However, it will not protect your computer against vulnerabilities that give an attacker administrative privileges.
- 7. Establish guidelines for computer use.** Setting boundaries and guidelines within your organization will help to protect data. Consult CIRMA's *Cyber Security* whitepaper at [www.CIRMA.org/Publications](http://www.CIRMA.org/Publications).
- 8. Use strong passwords and encrypt sensitive files.** Passwords and other security features add layers of protection if used appropriately.
- 9. Follow municipal or school policies for handling and storing work-related information** If you use your personal computer for work-related purposes, make sure to follow any work policies for handling and storing the information.
- 10. Dispose of sensitive information properly.** Simply deleting a file does not completely erase it. Your best option is to investigate software programs and hardware devices that are designed to erase your hard drive, CD, or DVD.

*Information from US-CERT Publications, MS-ISAC*

CIRMA LAP members: If you experience a data breach or loss, please report it immediately to CIRMA. Visit [CIRMA.org/Claims](http://CIRMA.org/Claims) Reporting page for specific reporting instructions.

