



# News Release



## WISCONSIN HOMELAND SECURITY COUNCIL

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## **Businesses need to know their Cybersecurity Risks**

October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month in Wisconsin

(MADISON) – Is your business and employees protected from online attacks? How about your customers? Assessing the risks is critical to all business, but especially small and medium size ventures. Cybercriminals target these businesses because the bad guys know that they have fewer defense resources than large companies.

“You don’t need to be a cybersecurity expert to ensure that your business is protected, but it is critical that you understand the online threats to your company’s network,” says Major General Don Dunbar, Adjutant General and Wisconsin’s Homeland Security Advisor. “Awareness of key threats will enable you to employ practices and behaviors that limit your company’s risk.”

A recent study conducted by National Cyber Security Alliance (NCSA) and Symantec showed that:

- 66% of small businesses say they are dependent on the Internet for day to day operations.
- 67% say they have become more dependent on the Internet in the last 12 months.
- 77% don’t have formal written Internet security policies for employees.

Most cybersecurity experts recommend that businesses start by developing a strategic approach to cybersecurity. This includes plans to secure existing systems, require employee training and to keep business secure going forward. Here are some simple tips to protect your business:

- **Keep a clean machine:** Having the latest security software, web browser and operating system is the best defense against viruses, malware and other online threats.
- **Automate software updates:** Many software programs will automatically connect and update to defend against known risks. Turn on automatic updates if that’s an available option.
- **When in doubt, throw it out:** Links in email, tweets, posts and online advertising are often how cybercriminals try to steal your personal information. Even if you know the source, if something looks suspicious, delete it.
- **Don’t open unsolicited email:** Email scams like phishing are among the most common schemes criminals use to steal from your network. Use email filters to block these emails and be leery of any messages that ask you to provide personal information, even if they appear to come from a bank or company you’ve dealt with.

- **Protect all devices that connect to the Internet:** Along with computers, smartphones, gaming systems and other web-enabled devices also need protection from viruses and malware.
- **Plug & scan:** USBs and other external devices can be infected by viruses and malware. Use your security software to scan them.

This October, ReadyWisconsin will highlight efforts to keep everyone in Wisconsin safe from cybercrime. Visit <http://readywisconsin.wi.gov> for more information. You can also follow us on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

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