

# advisory

## STEPS TO PROTECT YOUR WORKPLACE AGAINST SPOOFERS AND CYBER SCAMS

We read about companies and individuals being scammed by hacking or spoofing routinely. No business or individual is immune. Spoofing is a technique in which the spoofer goes to great lengths to secure access to user systems and the information behind protective fire walls. This type of scam artist tracks email communication in an attempt to trick the recipient of an email to release sensitive information or even gain access to bank accounts and confidential information. Email spoofing is also referred to as “phishing,” and is employed to make the recipient of an email

believe that the sender is a known source. Always beware of “From” when you do not recognize the sender because what appears to be real, may turn out to be a phishing attempt. And anytime a sender is asking for a password or personal information, delete the email immediately.



Internet scam artists are sophisticated thieves who set up fraudulent websites to obtain information from victims or seek to install viruses on their victims' computers. Once the spoofer gains access to the system, they send illegitimate emails to unknowing recipients. Common scams are to ask for passwords or direct the recipient to send company funds to a third party. Another example of this type of

spoofing is when the recipient of an email is directed to a site that looks like it's from their credit card company and the person is asked to log into the site. If you do log into the site, the spoofer could then log onto the real site and create significant damage by using the personal account information.

We all need to be extremely cautious whenever we receive a message asking for personal information and only download files from trusted sources. Make certain that your system is adequately protected with firewalls to block inquiries that are sent from unknown sources and maintain up to date antivirus software. Spoofers and online scams are becoming more sophisticated. It is wise to test your antivirus program regularly and install upgrades and plug-ins as necessary.

Below are a few steps recommended by security experts, which will improve your online security against spoofers and cyber scams:

- Passwords should always be at least eight characters and include a combination of letters and numbers unrelated to you or your family. Weak passwords are a target for spoofers.
- Don't allow others to access your password protected sites without you being present and change your password routinely.
- Keep passwords on an old computer not connected to the internet and if you don't have an extra computer, encrypt the files.
- Another layer of protection could involve keeping the files in two locations. Copy the encrypted files to a DVD or flash drive and give it to a trusted family member or friend. If your computer is infected by a virus and temporarily unusable, those files will still be available to you.
- Don't enter user names or passwords when an e-mail or pop-up window asks for it.

All businesses must be diligent in protecting confidential information. Employing skilled technology consultants is one of the best ways to make certain that state-of-the-art encryption and fire walls are effective.



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