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Important Steps for Protection Against Cyberattacks & Identity Theft

Do you, like me, feel a bit of angst whenever a prompt pops up asking for online login and password information? Remembering passwords can feel like the bane of our digital existence. However, in an increasingly technological world, using passwords effectively along with other actions can help keep you and your family safe online.

Understanding the risks of not properly protecting online information, my Office conducted an audit on data privacy and security a few years ago. Cyber incidents are happening more frequently across all industries and organizations. The City even recently experienced one. Now that much of our lives exist online—from work access to banking to shopping and social media—it's important to take steps for protection against cyberattacks and identity theft.

Here are some tips to improve digital safety that I found helpful, and I hope you do too.

Back up critical files. Store backups of critical digital files on a separate drive like an encrypted USB. Also, print and store hard copies of important documents in a safe place.

Use Strong Passwords. When creating passwords do not use personal information. Instead, make passwords long and unique with numbers, symbols, and both uppercase and lowercase letters. Although it may be tempting to reuse passwords, use different passwords for different accounts including work and personal accounts. Even consider using a password manager to save passwords and reduce the risk of reusing passwords. Don't let apps and websites remember your passwords and use multi-factor authentication when possible. Also, do not share your passwords with others.

Be aware of suspicious links and attachments. Even if you receive an email that looks like it's from someone you know, be careful with email links and attachments. If something looks suspicious, don't even reply to the email, because the sender's identity or information might have been compromised.

Verify requests for private information. Whenever you are asked to provide sensitive information online, verify the identity of the requester, even if it appears to be somebody you know or a familiar company or organization.

Regularly check the activity of your online accounts — this includes financial statements and credit reports.

Keep your devices, browsers, and apps up to date. Automate software updates and periodically restart your devices to ensure that updates are fully installed.

To find out more important tips and information on cybersecurity visit www.longbeach.gov/ti/news/cybersecurity-at-the-city.

P.S. If you need help with any of these steps, just contact anyone 14 years old or younger.

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