NEWS RELEASE

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

datcp.wi.gov

Cyber Security Awareness Month – Daily Tips, Week 2: Keep a Clean Machine

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MADISON – In recognition of National Cyber Security Awareness Month, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) will release a cyber safety tip each weekday in October, with each week addressing a different theme. The agency will release the daily tips through the Bureau of Consumer Protection's Facebook and Twitter accounts.

To assist media partners that may wish to cover the cyber tip topics, DATCP will send out a release each Friday in October with the next week's messages. Media partners can contact Jerad Albracht (Senior Communications Specialist, 608-224-5007, jerad.albracht@wisconsin.gov) if they would like to speak with a Bureau of Consumer Protection representative about the campaign or about a specific tip.

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Cyber Security Awareness Month, Week 2: Keep a Clean Machine

Monday, 10/9. Run a free computer security check, then build up your defenses

Start out Cyber Security Awareness Month, Week #2 with a clean sweep of your computer system. At the end of the month, sweep it again and make a plan to do so regularly.

StaySafeOnline.org has a listing of free security check services here: https://staysafeonline.org/stay-safe-online/free-online-security-checkups-tools/.

Now that you know where you stand, build up your protections for the future. Make sure you have up-to-date antivirus and anti-spyware software and a firewall. Set this software to update its protections regularly. Protect against intrusions and infections that can compromise your computer files or passwords by installing the latest security patches and bug fixes for your operating system and other software programs. #CyberAware

Tuesday, 10/10. Backup, backup, backup.

Halloween is scary. But do you know what's scarier? Losing all of your important files and your photos, music, and videos to a hard drive failure, accidental deletion, device theft, or "ransomware" scam (a type of malware that locks up your files until you pay the scammer).

These things happen and there is often little you can do to get your files back after the fact. Don't let it happen to you. Backup your files fully and often.

Regularly sync your mobile devices with your laptop or desktop computer or to a cloud service. Backup your laptop or desktop to an external hard drive or cloud service. One dead hard drive, misplaced mouse click or lost device could spell the end of all of your files…take steps NOW to protect your data. #CyberAware

(MORE)

Wednesday, 10/11. Run antivirus scans on external and USB flash drives

Did you know that viruses and malware can be transmitted via USB flash drives and other external devices? Use the security software on your computer to scan these devices before you access their contents. Plug in, run a scan, access files. #CyberAware

Thursday, 10/12: Think before you app

Malware lurks in downloadable applications. Only download software from authorized app stores – and even then, do some research about specific applications and developers before you make a purchase. Even apps as simple and seemingly harmless as a flashlight utility have been found to harvest and send data to advertisers without informing the user.

Before downloading an application to your computer or mobile device, understand what information (your location, your contacts, access to social networks, etc.) the app accesses when running. You may be surprised at what you find. #CyberAware

Friday, 10/13: Delete when done

This tip falls right in line with this week's goal of keeping our devices free of junk and up-to-date. Many of us download apps to our devices for specific purposes (such as planning a vacation or saving money at a particular business) and no longer need them after a while. Or we may have downloaded apps at some point that are no longer useful or interesting to us. Forgotten software that is not updated regularly could harbor vulnerabilities on your system. It's a good security practice to delete all apps you no longer use. #CyberAware