ASSOCIATION OF MANITOBA MUNICIPALITIES | INSURANCE PROGRAM

PHISHING EMAILS

Phishing attacks on Canadian businesses, governments and non-profits have been steadily increasing over the past couple of years. A report done by Statistics Canada found 48% of the Canadian population received at least one fraudulent email in 2018. If successful, these attacks can cripple your networks or cause significant financial damage. While most organizations have cybersecurity systems in place to combat phishing attacks, it is important that risk management strategies are employed to reduce the chance for loss.

What is Phishing?

Phishing attacks often aim to steal user data, such as login credentials or financial information. Cybercriminals, posing as legitimate organizations, will send messages through email, social media platforms or other messaging services that aim to get victims to click on fraudulent links or provide information. Cybercriminals will then use this data to hack company servers or funnel funds from victim's accounts.

Identifying Phishing Emails

- Watch out for sensationalized, false or misleading information.
- Beware of products claiming to be miracle cures or remedies.
- Beware of unsolicited advisory emails with links or attachments.
- Fraudsters may spoof the information of government and health care organizations with medical advisory emails with links or attachments. Government and health care organizations will **never** ask for information over email.
- Beware of unauthorized or fraudulent charities requesting money. Ensure to verify that it is a registered charity.

Risk Management Tips

- Keep all systems current and updated with the latest security patches.
- Require encryption for employees that are telecommuting.
- Notify your Information and Technology department / provider of any phishing emails.
- Install reputable antivirus software and monitor the antivirus status on all equipment.
- Conduct training sessions for employees with mock phishing scenarios.
- Utilize a reputable SPAM filter that detects viruses, blank senders, etc.
- Deploy a web filter to block malicious websites.
- Convert HTML email into text-only email messages or disable HTML email messages.

For more information, please contact either your dedicated Commercial Insurance Advisor, or Mr. Rudy Penner - Director, Risk Management (1-800-665-8990 ext. 6163).

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