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America’s Cyber Defense Agency

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE SECURITY AND RESILIENCE

Shields Up: Guidance for Organizations

CISA recommends all organizations—regardless of size—adopt a heightened posture when it comes to cybersecurity and protecting their most critical assets. Recognizing that many organizations find it challenging to identify resources for urgent security improvements, we’ve compiled free cybersecurity services and tools from government partners, and industry to assist. Recommended actions include:

Reduce the likelihood of a damaging cyber intrusion

- Validate that all remote access to the organization’s network and privileged or administrative access requires multi-factor authentication.
- Ensure that software is up to date, prioritizing updates that address known exploited vulnerabilities identified by CISA.
- Confirm that the organization’s IT personnel have disabled all ports and protocols that are not essential for business purposes.
- If the organization is using cloud services, ensure that IT personnel have reviewed and implemented strong controls outlined in CISA's guidance.

- Sign up for CISA's free cyber hygiene services, including vulnerability scanning, to help reduce exposure to threats.

Take steps to quickly detect a potential intrusion

- Ensure that cybersecurity/IT personnel are focused on identifying and quickly assessing any unexpected or unusual network behavior. Enable logging in order to better investigate issues or events.
- Confirm that the organization's entire network is protected by antivirus/antimalware software and that signatures in these tools are updated.
- If working with Ukrainian organizations, take extra care to monitor, inspect, and isolate traffic from those organizations; closely review access controls for that traffic.

Ensure that the organization is prepared to respond if an intrusion occurs

- Designate a crisis-response team with main points of contact for a suspected cybersecurity incident and roles/responsibilities within the organization, including technology, communications, legal and business continuity.
- Assure availability of key personnel; identify means to provide surge support for responding to an incident.
- Conduct a tabletop exercise to ensure that all participants understand their roles during an incident.

Maximize the organization's resilience to a destructive cyber incident

- Test backup procedures to ensure that critical data can be rapidly restored if the organization is impacted by ransomware or a destructive cyberattack; ensure that backups are isolated from network connections.
- If using industrial control systems or operational technology, conduct a test of manual controls to ensure that critical functions remain operable if the organization’s network is unavailable or untrusted.

By implementing the steps above, all organizations can make near-term progress toward improving cybersecurity and resilience. In addition, while recent cyber incidents have not been attributed to specific actors, CISA urges cybersecurity/IT personnel at every organization to review Understanding and Mitigating Russian State-Sponsored Cyber Threats to U.S. Critical Infrastructure. CISA also recommends organizations visit StopRansomware.gov, a centralized, whole-of-government webpage providing ransomware resources and alerts.

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