



Kansas Insurance Department

Ken Selzer, CPA, Commissioner of Insurance

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Consumer alert: Strengthen your technology security skills

TOPEKA, KS –Recent news reports about information stolen from computer and technology users across the United States, including hacking activity here in Kansas, pose the need for citizens to strengthen their technology security skills, said Ken Selzer, CPA, Kansas Commissioner of Insurance.

“The continual increase in cyber traffic means that home computer networks and smart devices are more vulnerable to malicious scamming and hacking by persons who want to steal your information and identity,” Commissioner Selzer said. “We need to be vigilant in making sure our personal information is kept secure.”

Commissioner Selzer and national cybersecurity experts suggest the following guidelines for computer and smart device consumers as they work to strengthen their privacy with connected technologies.

- Set strong passwords and don't share them with anyone. Set them with at least eight characters, including letters, numbers and symbols.
- When using unfamiliar websites, be sure the URL begins with “https.” The “s” at the end indicates it is a secure site.
- Keep your operating system, browser, and other critical software optimized by installing updates, including antivirus and anti-spyware updates.
- Maintain an open dialogue with your family, friends, and community about Internet safety. Let them know you take it seriously.
- Limit the amount of personal information you post online, and use privacy settings to avoid sharing information widely.
- Be cautious about what you receive or read online—if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Also, if a message sounds out of character for the sender, or includes nothing but a link in the body of the email, it may be suspicious. Check with the person who purportedly sent you the message to make sure it is legitimate.

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- Cyber attackers often take advantage of current events to conduct “phishing” attacks, where they will attempt to obtain personal information by posing as a trustworthy organization. Verify the legitimacy of the organization’s request by contacting the company by another means.
- Limit the type of business you conduct on public Wi-Fi networks. Don’t do your online shopping from an Internet café. Do business with credible companies, and devote one credit card with a small credit line to online purchases.
- Password-protect your smart phone.
- Finally, and maybe most importantly, check your homeowners or identity theft insurance policies for the level of coverage you have in case of a cyberattack on your devices.

“It is important that cyber vigilance begins at home,” Commissioner Selzer said. “Knowing some common-sense precautions can keep you and your personal information safer.”

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The Kansas Insurance Department, established in 1871, assists and educates consumers, regulates and reviews companies, and licenses agents selling insurance products in the state. More about the department is online at www.ksinsurance.org or at www.facebook.com/kansasinsurancedepartment.