



Kansas Insurance Department

Ken Selzer, CPA, Commissioner of Insurance

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Consumer alert:

Should you strengthen your cybersecurity?

TOPEKA, KS – The amount of information reportedly stolen from computer and technology users across the United States points out the need for Kansans to strengthen their technology security skills, said Ken Selzer, CPA, Kansas Commissioner of Insurance.

“October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month,” Commissioner Selzer said. “What better time to increase your online vigilance to make sure your 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 do not 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.
- 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 an email, it may be suspicious. Check with the person who purportedly sent you the message to make sure it is legitimate.
- Limit the type of business you conduct on public Wi-Fi networks. Avoid doing 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.
- 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.

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“Even with protection and enforcement activities from the federal government, cyber vigilance needs to begin at home,” Commissioner Selzer said. “Knowing some common-sense precautions can keep you and your personal information safer.”

For more about National Cybersecurity Awareness Month and other tips for protecting your information, go to www.staysafeonline.org.

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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.