Small Business Cybersecurity Checklist

The step-by-step guide to enhancing your digital security

How to use this Checklist

This checklist is your roadmap to a stronger cybersecurity posture. While no business is completely immune to cyberattacks, taking these steps will significantly reduce your cyber risk. Start with the essentials and continue to build upon your defenses as your business grows.

Prioritize: Focus on the "Building Your Secure Foundation" section first. These are non-negotiable actions for any small business.

Progress Tracking: The checkboxes allow you to easily track your completion of each cybersecurity task.

Ongoing Reference: Revisit this checklist regularly to assess your security posture and ensure you're staying up-to-date with evolving threats. cybersecurity is an ongoing process, not a one-time fix!

Building Your Secure Foundation

These actions are the cornerstone of your cybersecurity strategy. Prioritize completing these essentials to significantly strengthen your defenses.

Technical Safeguards

Passwords

[ ] Implement a password manager (include a link to a resource on choosing one)

[ ] Enforce strong, unique passwords for every account and device.

Updates

[ ] Enable automatic updates for operating systems, software, and security applications on all devices.

Backups

[ ] Develop a backup plan: Store backups in multiple locations (cloud service and external hard drive).

[ ] Schedule regular backups (daily, weekly, etc. - specify based on your audience)

Network Protection

[ ] Secure your network with a firewall (hardware).

[ ] Enable firewalls on individual devices for remote work.

Device Security

[ ] Install endpoint security software (antivirus) software on all devices.

[ ] Implement screen locks and strong passcodes/PINs on mobile devices.

Employee Empowerment

Phishing & Scams

[ ] Conduct employee training on recognizing phishing emails and other common scams. (Include a link to a reputable training resource).

Safe Online Habits

[ ] Provide employees with guidelines for safe web browsing and file downloading.

Incident Reporting

[ ] Establish a clear, easy-to-follow process for employees to report suspicious activity or security incidents.

Small Business Cybersecurity Checklist (Advanced)

Strengthening Your Defenses

Clear rules and careful partnerships significantly enhance your business's overall security posture.

Define Clear Policies

Access Limits

[ ] Implement a "need-to-know" approach: Only grant access to sensitive data to employees who require it for their roles.

Data Handling

[ ] Create guidelines for secure storage, transmission, and disposal of sensitive data (customer info, financials, etc.)

Acceptable Use

[ ] Develop a policy outlining acceptable internet, email, and device usage for employees.

Vendor & Partners Vigilance

Security Assessment Questions

[ ] Prepare a list of questions to ask vendors and partners about their cybersecurity practices (data storage, incident response, etc.)

[ ] Consider including cybersecurity clauses in new contracts.

Incident Response Essentials

Even with the best defenses, cyber incidents can happen. This section helps you outline the immediate steps to take if you suspect a breach.

Immediate Containment Actions

[ ] Identify steps to isolate affected systems (disconnect from network, etc.).

[ ] Create a list of steps to prevent further spread of the issue.

Who to Contact

[ ] Designate an internal point of contact for incident reporting (IT staff, business owner, etc.).

[ ] Compile a list of external contacts (law enforcement, cybersecurity firms, etc.).

Incident Documentation

[ ] Outline what to record during an incident: systems affected, type of attack (if known), timestamps, etc.

Advanced Security

As your business grows and your digital assets become more complex, consider implementing these additional safeguards.

Advanced Protection

[ ] Explore specialized security tools tailored to your industry or specific risks.

Encryption

[ ] Implement encryption for sensitive data on devices (when stored on devices) and in cloud (when stored in cloud services).

Cyber Insurance

[ ] Research cyber insurance policies that provide financial protection in the event of a data breach or cyber attack.

Visit **https://bogdancarlescu.com** for more resources on how to build a resilient business!