



October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month: Keep Fraudsters at Bay with These Tips

Dear Friends,

In this day and age, security doesn't just mean keeping your personal information safe from prying eyes or remembering to lock your doors. A total of **878.17 million data records** were compromised worldwide in January 2021 alone, more than in the entire 12 months of 2017, setting 2021 on course to be a record-breaker in terms of breach volumes.

We make conscious efforts to be as vigilant as possible when it comes to protecting our clients from those with ill intentions. For instance, our technological systems are monitored 24 hours a day for signs of unusual activity and we perform continuous IT risk assessments to protect our data. However, the power is also in your hands. There are steps you can take to join in our fight against the misuse of your digital information and help safeguard your online presence.

The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) regularly shares cybersecurity tips to help protect investors from cyber threats while promoting the safe and secure use of the internet. Here is some advice to keep in mind:

- **Watch out for the wolf in sheep's clothing:** Victims of fraud may get targeted again by scammers impersonating government officials who offer to help recover investment-related losses. For a fee, of course. It all looks legitimate, with forged signatures and emails that appear to come from similarly named government accounts. Combat their tricks by calling the SEC directly at 800.732.0330 to confirm a correspondence is legitimate.
- **Know when it's too good to be true:** Investments may seem authentic, shilled by identity thieves who portray themselves as successful professionals. They may use easily available information to dishonestly claim they work at a respectable firm or appear as a financial expert on TV. Verify these claims using the SEC's [Investment Advisor Public Disclosure \(IAPD\)](#) and FINRA's [BrokerCheck](#). And if in doubt, take caution.
- **Beware of these warning signs:** Keep an eye out for investment opportunities claiming you'll receive considerably more than you'd expect from trusted stock indexes. Fraudsters may also try convincing you to make a rushed, last-minute investment without giving you the time to consider it. To best avoid these safety pitfalls, take precaution by using complex passwords, looking for suspicious activity on your credit reports and installing antivirus software on your computer.

We work diligently each day to ensure your best interests are top of mind and your personal information is kept safe. If you'd like more information about how to protect yourself from cyber threats, please feel free to reach out. We're here to help.

Announcements:

- This year's **Trick or Treat on Water St.** event in downtown Augusta will be held on **Saturday, October 29th from 5:30-8:00pm**. The MFG team will have a table right out front our office at 320 Water St. Come join the fun and say hello!
- The month of October is notably honored by holding the title of **Breast Cancer Awareness Month**. To learn more on how you can help and stay protected check out the governmental Breast Cancer site [here](#).
- We're only a few months away from 2023; add [these](#) important financial deadlines to your year-end calendar. Please reach out if you have any questions.

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