

NEWS ALERT**INFORMATION SECURITY AND PRIVACY****Five Things You Can Do to Protect Your Business From a Cyber Attack**

By Dena M. Castricone and Daniel J. Kagan | May 16, 2017

On Friday, May 12, 2017, a damaging ransomware attack swept across more than one hundred countries and infected tens of thousands of computers. As is becoming all too common, the hackers transmitted the ransomware via a phishing e-mail, and then, once the user clicked the bait, the hackers used a method thought to have been developed by the National Security Agency, and locked businesses out of their systems. The ransomware impacted businesses both large and small, notably including sixteen of Great Britain's hospitals forcing them to turn patients away, FedEx, the Russian Interior Ministry and a large Spanish telecommunications company. While in the wake of the attack, affected businesses must focus on damage control and clean-up, unaffected businesses should react and take steps to protect themselves ahead of being on the receiving end of the next cyber incident. Accordingly, here are five things that all businesses can do.

1. **Install All Patches and Upgrades to Systems When Issued.** In the case of this ransomware attack, Microsoft released a patch weeks before the attack hit, which would have protected systems by not permitting the ransomware to take hold.
2. **Back-Up All Vital Data on a Continuous Basis.** This is of particular importance in ransomware attacks. Ransomware encrypts a victim's data and will only provide a key for access upon the payment of ransom. The payment of a ransom, however, may be unnecessary when up-to-date backups are available.
3. **Employee Training.** Employees should be trained on a regular basis on how to identify phishing e-mails and how to avoid cyber attacks.
4. **Purchase and/or Examine Cyber Security Insurance Policy for Compliance.** If your business currently has a cyber security insurance policy, ensure that the policy adequately covers your needs and ensure that your business meets the security requirements attested to in such policy.

5. **Perform a Risk Assessment and Develop a Response Plan.** Assessing current systems will help to identify vulnerabilities that can be addressed proactively. For health care providers, HIPAA requires that covered entities perform a “risk analysis” to identify risks and security vulnerabilities and implement security measures that are sufficient to reduce such risks and vulnerabilities. Lack of an up-to-date risk analysis recently resulted in a fine of \$400,000 against a health care provider ([see April 25, 2017 article](#)). Further, the assessment or analysis will assist with the development and implementation of a Security Incident Response Plan that is designed to ensure expedient and appropriate responses to cyber-attacks and to mitigate damage whenever possible.

On June 7, 2017, Murtha Cullina LLP is hosting a free half-day Cyber Security Conference entitled “Protecting our Businesses, State and Nation.” The Conference will be held at the Quinnipiac University School of Law from 8:30 am-12:30 pm. You can register by [clicking here](#).

If you have any questions regarding information privacy and security issues or HIPAA, please contact Dena M. Castricone or Daniel J. Kagan.

Dena M. Castricone at 203.772.7767 or dcastricone@murthalaw.com or Daniel J. Kagan at 203.772.7726 or dkagan@murthalaw.com

Burt Cohen, Co-Chair
203.772.7714
bcohen@murthalaw.com

Dena M. Castricone, Co-Chair
203.772.7767
dcastricone@murthalaw.com

Heather O. Berchem
203.772.7728
hberchem@murthalaw.com

Michael P. Connolly
617.457.4078
mconnolly@murthalaw.com

Daniel J. Kagan
203.772.7726
dkagan@murthalaw.com

Rachel Snow Kindseth
203.772.7774
rkindseth@murthalaw.com

Bruce L. McDermott
203.772.7787
bmcdermott@murthalaw.com

James F. Radke
617.457.4130
jradke@murthalaw.com

Stephanie Sprague Sobkowiak
203.772.7782
ssobkowiak@murthalaw.com

Ryan M. Suerth
860.240.6157
rsuerth@murthalaw.com

David R. Sullivan
617.457.4156
drsullivan@murthalaw.com

Suzanne Brown Walsh
860.240.6041
swalsh@murthalaw.com

Edward B. Whittemore
860.240.6075
ewhittemore@murthalaw.com

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