

5 ways to stay secure online



► Hook up to a network that you know

Free Wi-Fi is tempting, but be sure that you consider who is providing the connection. Public connections at the local coffee shop are usually unsecured and leave your machine open to outsiders. While these networks provide a convenience, there are risks to be aware of.



► Bank and shop with caution

Shopping from familiar websites is a good place to start. Stick with the reputable sites that are tried and tested – like Amazon or eBay. Also, when checking out and finalising the purchase, look for the ‘padlock’ symbol or the abbreviation ‘https’ in the address bar at the top of your browser. This will ensure that you are on a secure, encrypted part of this webpage. Keeping an eye on your bank statements for suspicious activity is always a good idea, among these other best practices for shopping online.



► Use secure passwords

Passwords for logging into any website should contain a mix of letters, numbers, and special characters – as well as be different for each website that you log into. It can definitely be a pain to remember all of these passwords, but ask yourself which is more of a pain – remembering these, or recovering stolen personal information.



► Lock your computer

When you walk away from your machine, lock it. In Windows, it is as easy as pressing the Windows key + L. On an Apple Mac, pressing “Control+Shift+Q” will do the trick. This practice would be the equivalent to deadbolting the front door of your home. It acts as a deterrent to the bad guys as well as a line of defence. It may even be worth setting up a password lock on your Apple or Windows machine as well.



► Do not click on anything unfamiliar

If an offer is too good to be true, it probably is. If you get an email from an unknown source, do not click any of the links within it – and immediately report it to your IT department. If a window pops up while browsing a website, immediately close it. Familiarity is always your friend. Using your judgment and trusting your gut is the ultimate defence when online. Always play it safe!