

# Splash into Summer Safely

## June 5, 2024

Temperatures are heating up, and it's time for a little fun in the sun! Vacations are a great opportunity to relax, reconnect and embark on new adventures. Before you depart, add a simple cybersecurity checklist, along with your packing routine.

## Fake Reviews

Did you know scammers can buy fake online reviews? Scams for hotels, Airbnb's, rental cars and special activities, at your destination, has become common practice.

Look out for nearly identical reviews under different customer personas, or seek out reviews from external third parties, such as the Better Business Bureau (BBB).

## Apps & Official Websites Only

Once you finalize your travel plans, you expect to receive email confirmations and updates from airlines and hotels. Hackers know this and craft phishing emails to target you.

To avoid this, install official apps or use the official website for travel alerts. Remember, a web address with "https://" (WITH an s) means the site takes extra security measures. However, an "http://" (withOUT an s) address is not secure.

## Travel Light & Protect Physical Devices

Limit the number of devices you take to help limit your risk. Ensure your devices and chargers are with you at all times, while traveling. If you must leave items in your hotel, lock them in a safe or in your luggage. Never leave your devices unattended in public places or with a stranger. Not only can they be physically stolen, but a thief could also access your personal information.

## Check Privacy & Location Settings

Review your privacy, security and location tracking settings on web services and apps. Consider limiting how and with whom you share information. Location tools come in handy while navigating a new city, but they can also expose your location – even through photos and social media. Turn

off location services when not in use.

## Update Software & Backup Files

Ensure everything is up-to-date on the devices you plan to take. Updates often include important security patches to protect you from the latest threats. Cybercriminals are always on the lookout for weaknesses in outdated software, to exploit and gain unauthorized access. Keep devices updated, during your travels, by turning on “automatic updates”.

Back up the data, on your devices, to an external hard drive or a cloud service. If your device is lost or stolen, and you cannot access, you will not lose all of your information. Regular backups also protect you from data loss, due to device failures or malware infections.

## Setup the 'Find my Device/Phone' Feature

Not only does this feature allow you to locate your phone, it gives you the power to remotely wipe data or disable the device if it gets into the wrong hands.

## Secure Home Network

While on vacation, consider turning off your router, unless you need it for smart home devices. An idle router can be an easy target for cybercriminals.

By turning it off, you are eliminating a potential entry point for hackers who might try to compromise your home network. If you need to keep it on, ensure it is secured with a strong, unique password and the firmware is up-to-date.

## Stop Auto Connecting

Some devices will automatically seek and connect to available wireless (Wi-Fi) networks and Bluetooth. Bluetooth enables your device to connect wirelessly with other devices, such as headphones or automobile infotainment (in-car entertainment) systems.

These features can provide cybercriminals access to your devices. Disable these features so you only connect to Wi-Fi and Bluetooth when you want. If you do not need them, switch them off.

## Avoid Public Computers

Avoid public computers in hotel lobbies and internet cafes. If you must use, clear the cache and browsing history, and delete all the temporary files from the computer. Keep your activities generic

or go incognito (private browsing).

Avoid making online purchases or accessing your accounts on public computers. If you do log into accounts, never allow the browser to remember your ID and password. When you are finished, logout. Simply closing the browser does not log you out of accounts.

# Financial Protection

Use a credit card instead of a debit card, for added financial protection. Notify your financial institutions of your travel dates and only shop and bank on familiar, secure sites.

Remember cybersecurity is a journey, not a destination. Stay vigilant, follow these tips, and you will be well on your way to a safer, more secure summer vacation. Safe travels!

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