

5 Ways to Protect Your Small Business from Account Fraud

Corporate account takeover is a type of fraud where thieves gain access to a business' finances to make unauthorized transactions, including transferring funds from the company, creating and adding new fake employees to payroll, and stealing sensitive customer information that may not be recoverable.

To avoid this happening to you, Heritage Bank recommends following the following tips to keep your small business safe:

1) EDUCATE YOUR EMPLOYEES

You and your employees are the first line of defense against corporate account takeover. A strong security program paired with employee education about the warning signs, safe practices, and responses to a suspected takeover are essential to protecting your company and customers.

2) PROTECT YOUR ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

It is important to protect your cyber environment just as you would your cash and physical location. Do not use unprotected internet connections. Encrypt sensitive data and keep updated virus protections on your computer. Use complex passwords and change them periodically.

3) PARTNER WITH YOUR BANK TO PREVENT UNAUTHORIZED TRANSACTIONS

Talk to us about programs that safeguard you from unauthorized transactions. Positive Pay and other services offer callbacks, device authentication, multi-person approval processes and batch limits help protect you from fraud.

4) PAY ATTENTION TO SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY AND REACT QUICKLY

Look out for unexplained account or network activity, pop ups, and suspicious emails. If detected, immediately contact your financial institution, stop all online activity and remove any systems that may have been compromised. Keep records of what happened.

5) UNDERSTAND YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AND LIABILITIES

The account agreement with your bank will detail what commercially reasonable security measures are required in your business. It is critical that you understand and implement the security safeguards in the agreement. If you don't, you could be liable for losses resulting from a takeover. Talk to your banker if you have any questions about your responsibilities.

For additional information, please don't hesitate to contact any Heritage Bank branch. You can also visit the following websites to learn more about how to protect your small business:

U.S. Chamber of Commerce: Internet Security Essentials for Business: <http://www.uschamber.com/issues/technology/internet-security-essentials-business>

Federal Communications Commission: Small Biz Cyber Planner: <http://www.fcc.gov/cyberplanner>

Federal Communications Commission: 10 Cybersecurity Strategies for Small Business : http://www.uschamber.com/sites/default/files/issues/defense/files/10_CYBER_Strategies_for_Small_Biz.pdf

Better Business Bureau: Data Security Made Simpler: <http://www.bbb.org/data-security/>

NACHA – The Electronic Payments Association Corporate Account Takeover Resource Center : <https://www.nacha.org/content/corporate-account-takeover-resource-center>